

JUNE, 1888.

# The Congregational Review

IN WHICH ARE INCORPORATED

The Congregationalist and British Quarterly Review.

EDITED BY THE

REV. J. GUINNESS ROGERS, B.A.

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### "ROBERT ELSMERE."\*

"ROBERT ELSMERE" will be very differently judged, according to the tastes of individual readers and the standpoint from which it is viewed. As an attack upon Christianity written with so much of power and brilliancy as to call forth our veteran statesman as a defender, it must necessarily excite widespread interest. We are all familiar with the kind of reception which awaits a new manifestation of unbelief, if it have any literary character. It may be shallow and superficial; it may betray not only a want of sympathy with the aims of the gospel, but a strange inability to comprehend its vital principles; it may be singularly lacking in justice and discrimination: but the fact that it is fitted to undermine the faith of men will be sufficient to secure for it the extravagant plaudits of a certain class of reviewers. We remember the flourish of trumpets with which Mr. Cotter Morison's book was introduced, and now all the world knows how little there was to justify the exultation of the enemies of the gospel. "Robert Elsmere" has been heralded in much the same fashion, and, we are bound to add, with more reason. It is undoubtedly a book of remarkable brilliancy and power, and yet we doubt whether these qualities would have secured for it the favourable notice it has received had it been on the opposite side of the controversy.

An evening journal at first described it as a dull

\* *Robert Elsmere*. By MRS. HUMPHREY WARD. In 3 vols. Fourth Edition (Smith, Elder & Co.).

novel which people had been allured into reading by the announcement that Mr. Gladstone was to review it. After the review appeared, it was described in the same paper as an "epoch-making book." The latter description is certainly as extravagant as the former is one-sided. Let it be frankly said at the outset that it did not need Mr. Gladstone's review to make it famous, for it has quite sufficient merit of its own to secure a high place in the literature of the day. It is a singularly graphic and brilliant picture of the literary world in its relations to Christianity. But while this is deeply interesting and even impressive, it requires much more to constitute an "epoch-making book." We have here no new and striking argument, no fresh exercise of the extraordinary ingenuity which a certain class of minds exhibit in the discovery of new difficulties in belief, no new light upon the great controversy which is always going on between faith and scepticism. Mrs. Humphry Ward leaves the argument precisely where she found it. Her book is in reality a story of the eclipse of faith in an individual soul, and in telling it she puts some of the arguments by which this was brought about in a striking form. But that is the utmost which can be said as to the reasonings, and it certainly requires very much more than this in any book which is to mark an epoch in the history of religious thought. On the other hand, Mr. Gladstone says: "'Robert Elsmere' is hard reading, and requires toil and effort." We doubt whether he is quite as right when he adds: "if it be difficult to persist, it is impossible to stop." What may be true as to a mind of his eagerness in pursuit of truth, may be anything but true as to minds of an inferior calibre. On the whole, we are inclined to think that the majority of readers will vote it dull. To the ordinary novel reader it will be intolerable, perhaps hardly intelligible, for though the brief love-stories which are introduced are simple and touching, there is little of incident in the book, and it can hardly be said that there is a plot at all.

It would, however, be extremely unfair to judge it by the standard of the ordinary novel, for that is not what it

claims to be. It is a portraiture of character, and looked at in this light, it must be pronounced a work of unusual power. There is hardly a character in the entire group to which we are introduced which is a lay figure, or one which has not a marked individuality of its own. Mrs. Ward seems to have a special pleasure in describing weak but amiable members of her own sex. The mother and the mother-in-law of the hero, and the sister of the Squire, are all of this class, with a certain family resemblance, inasmuch as in all of them there is the same absence of practical qualities; but the difference is just as marked and distinctive. They are all of them studies which would well repay careful analysis, did not subjects of deeper interest require more than the space which we can afford to the book. Then there are the clerical portraits, most of which are drawn in a very sympathetic spirit, from Robert Elsmere himself down to the High Church curates who were his mother's pet aversions. The sketch of these latter is one of the sharpest, and also the truest, of Mrs. Ward's touches, suggesting how much cultured people, and especially cultured laymen, suffer from these offensive products of High Anglicanism. Mrs. Elsmere was an Evangelical, but nevertheless did not complain of the Ritualist vicar, whose personal qualities disarmed the hostility which his ecclesiastical peculiarities might have provoked. But his curates—oh, his curates! They were the chief crook of her otherwise tolerable lot."

Her parish proclivities brought her across them perpetually, and she could not away with them. Their cassocks, their pretensions their stupidities, roused the Irishwoman's sense of humour at every turn. The individuals came and went, but the type, it seemed to her, was always the same; and she made their peculiarities the basis of a pessimist theory as to the future of the English Church, which was a source of constant amusement to the very broad-minded young men who filled up the school staff. She, so ready in general to see all the world's good points, was almost blind when it was a curate's virtues which were in question.

Some other of the portraits must receive fuller examination when we come to deal with the main object of the

book. It cannot be judged as a mere piece of literary workmanship, and yet it is sufficiently important in that aspect to deserve careful criticism. Looked at in this point of view, one of its chief faults is that there is too much in it. The style is attractive, the descriptions of natural scenery singularly fresh and vivid, the dramatic power shown both in the conversations and in some of the situations very considerable. There is no straining after effect. On the contrary, she seems to be pouring forth spontaneously and without stint of the treasures of a rich and highly cultivated intellect. But this very wealth is her snare. Again and again, after we have read through a passage of great brilliancy, we have found ourselves asking for what purpose is all this expenditure. Certainly, for its immediate relation to the purpose of the book is not apparent. Take, for example, the account of the visit of Elsmere and Langham to the library of the Squire. It is a very remarkable piece of writing, but what object it serves except to show the author's familiarity with wide fields of literature, some of them not often traversed, it is not easy to discover. No doubt it helps to impress us also with the extent and variety of the Squire's own reading; but that can hardly be said to have been necessary, since the one point we are never suffered to forget in relation to this remarkable individual, whose portrait is drawn with masterly skill, is that he is a man of gigantic brain power and extremely rare culture. We might, therefore, easily have spared some of the pages in which Mrs. Ward describes the treasures of the extraordinary library which had been collected in the quiet Surrey mansion, some of whose points recall to our minds beauties of that charming Wotton whose old garden Evelyn laid out, and almost every room of which has a memory of him. Were this a solitary case it might well be condoned, but unfortunately for the success of the work with the general reader, these superfluous passages are not uncommon. It must not be supposed that they are padding, for that is about the last thing to which Mrs. Ward might be expected to condescend. They are rather the overflowings of a full mind, very inte-

resting and effective in themselves, but adding to the extent of a book which, to say the truth, is altogether too long.

Mrs. Ward's object would seem to be to exhibit the revolt of literature against Christianity. Of the rebellion of science we have often heard. Her aim is to present the subject from the literary and historic standpoint. Mr. Grey (who is her favourite teacher) says, in relation to the change of view on the part of the hero with the history of which the book is occupied: "The process in you has been the typical process of the present day. Abstract thought has had little or nothing to say to it. It has been a question of literary and historical evidence. I am old-fashioned enough to stick to the *à priori* impossibility of miracles, but then I am a philosopher!" The entire change of view is thus made to rest upon the failure of testimony to establish the supernatural facts upon which Christianity rests. It should be said that in the working out of this idea there is no exhibition of that bitterness towards either the gospel or to Christian men which so strongly colours some sceptical representations as to neutralize their effect. So far from this, the finest characters (with the exception, perhaps, of Grey) are those which have been formed under the influence of Christianity, and, again with the same exception, the unbelievers are as unattractive in spirit and life as they are sceptical in opinion.

The Squire is the strongest example of the last remark. Langham is sufficiently hard, selfish, unamiable, with all the airs of an Oxford don, with head high up in air, but he has not the same opportunities for making his selfishness a curse to others as the Squire. The latter is a man of large possessions as well as great intellect, but he has as little thought of so managing the one as to contribute to the well-being of his tenants, even in the most moderate degree, as of employing the other for the real good of mankind. The first meeting of the rector with him at his own dinner-table reveals his spirit, and awakens a feeling against him which is certainly not all prejudice. The rector's offence is that he has remonstrated with the

greedy and unprincipled agent, to whom he had left the uncontrolled management of his estate, on the condition of a little nest of houses, which had been allowed to degenerate into a nursery for all kinds of pestilential diseases. Elsmere's interference on behalf of the tenantry was bitterly resented, and so, on his first visit to the Hall, the Squire receives him with a coldness which hardly stops short of rudeness, and addresses to him across the dinner-table a story intended for him, which was, in fact, another version of Talleyrand's well-known maxim, "Non trop de zèle."

"It is a story of Archbishop Manners Sutton," said Mr. Wendover, in his dry, nasal voice. "You probably know it, Mr. Elsmere. After Bishop Heber's consecration to the See of Calcutta, it fell to the Archbishop to make a valedictory speech, in the course of the luncheon at Lambeth which followed the ceremony. 'I have very little advice to give you as to your future career,' he said to the young Bishop, 'but all that experience has given me I hand on to you. Place before your eyes two precepts, and two only. One is, Preach the gospel; and the other is—Put down enthusiasm!'" (p. 86).

The beginning of the Squire's intercourse with Elsmere was therefore a public insult in which there came out the true character of this worshipper of intellect, this cynical incarnation of selfishness. The character is extremely well conceived, and worked out with a power which has a perilous tendency to run into extravagance. For this we are to some extent prepared by the unhappy antecedents of his family. Mrs. Ward never allows us to forget how important a factor in the formation of character is heredity, and the Squire's eccentricity and wildness find their explanation in the tendencies he has inherited with his great estate. A man less calculated to recommend a creed or to inspire any sympathy or confidence could hardly be imagined. One of the most curious features in the book, indeed, is the extraordinary influence which he established over Elsmere. For despite the young clergyman's righteous indignation at the Squire's criminal neglect of his tenants and his resentment of the insults offered to himself, he is attracted to this arrogant unbeliever by a fascination

which apparently he is powerless to resist. The intellectual power of the great scholar is the explanation of the whole. Whether as a man whose self-respect had been outraged by an insolence that approached so nearly to brutality that it might be objected to Mrs. Ward's account of the scene at the dinner-table that it was impossible for any English gentleman so to forget himself, or still more as a Christian minister who could not but resent the indignity put upon the faith which he preached and the Master whom he served, Elsmere must have felt an instinctive repulsion from the Squire. That he should have been drawn to him, and should have so far yielded to his influence as to forsake the gospel and deny his Lord, might seem almost incredible. We shall return to the point again ; at present we note it only as showing that our authoress has not sought to create a prejudice in favour of unbelief by ascribing a special nobility of character to the enemies of the gospel. The Squire is the most embittered and defiant of sceptics, and all his extraordinary intellectual power notwithstanding, he is one of the most detestable of men.

We may be pardoned if we linger a little on this man, who, rightly viewed, is one of the most impressive warnings against the tendency which is doing perhaps more than any other to undermine the foundations of faith, especially in the minds of young men. Roger Wendover has a high position, a great estate, unbounded wealth. His home is one of the grand historic mansions of England, and its most conspicuous feature is a library which, if it answer the description here given of it, must be one of the most extraordinary private collections in existence. This library was his throne, and while he could be there conducting researches in the most obscure fields of literature, or preparing fresh assaults on the faith he so bitterly hated, he was content. That any one should dare to interfere with these occupations of a being so superior by thrusting before him the sufferings of tenants whom he was allowing to rot in pestilence-breeding hovels unfit even for his dogs, was an intolerable grievance. "I

am," he says to Elsmere, in reply to his remonstrance, "a student first and foremost, and desire to be left to my books." If the object had been to portray the absolute worthlessness of culture as a moral force, it could not well have been done more effectually. What culture had to bestow had been lavished on this man, and in addition there were all the gifts of fortune to make his position in life easy and luxurious. There was not a wish he could not gratify, and he simply followed his own inclinations when he occupied his whole time in ministering to his fastidious intellectual tastes. He was the envied and admired of a circle including some of the leading minds of the day, and the result of the whole was the development of a selfishness which was so extreme as to be utterly intolerable. Elsmere's early feelings in relation to him were the true ones. "It became clear to him that the Squire had taken pains for years to let it be known that he cared not one jot for any human being on his estate in any other capacity than as a rent-payer or a wage-receiver. 'What!' he exclaimed, 'been for thirty years in that great house, and never cared whether your tenants and labourers lived like pigs or like men, whether the old people died of damp or the children of diphtheria which you might have prevented!'" Such is the product of a worship of intellect. Here is one of "the richest, most sceptical, and most highly trained of minds," and some unlettered preacher, on whom men of the Squire's type would look down with supercilious scorn, is doing better service to his generation than this child of genius. It is a lesson which this age needs to learn. There are multitudes who scorn the common idolatries of the world who bow down before intellect, and think themselves ennobled by the worship. The Squire is sufficient to show how possible it is to have it without its yielding happiness to the possessor, or enabling him to do any real good in the world.

If Mrs. Ward does not commend unbelief by her portraits of unbelievers, it must be said, on the other side, that she does not prejudice the claims of Christianity by



introducing us to low types of religious men. An inferior artist would have made the Squire an Evangelical who was so full of zeal for Hottentots and negroes that he forgot his own dependents and neighbours, and "sweated" out of his tenants unjust rents to supply the wants of some mission to Borriboola Gha. There is nothing of this kind in the book. The one fault of those characters which may be regarded as types of religious life, is that they are not intellectual. No one, indeed, so far removed from society as a Nonconformist is introduced. Of this we do not complain. It does seem somewhat strange that out of so extended and elaborate a picture of the religious life of the country, so important an element as that of Evangelical Dissenters is wholly left out. Occasional references remind us that there are a people called Nonconformists, but who they are and what part they play in the conflicts and movements of the time is not apparent. And yet it might be worth while to take some notice of a great body of earnest religious thinkers and workers who hold fast by the faith, though they are not fettered by creeds which are established by law. In this story, however, they have no place, and it is fair to add that the difficulties by which Robert Elsmere was troubled had nothing to do with any question between Church and Dissent.

We have more right to object to the absence of any strong representative of the Evangelical faith. Catherine, the noble-minded wife whom the hero had won with such difficulty, is a charming woman with a singular purity of spirit and force of character, but she represents only the ascetic side of that Puritanism of which she is represented as a type. Saintly and beautiful herself, so that she was known in her own circle as "Saint Elizabeth," she came from a "brutal, swearing, whisky-drinking stock," and the remembrance of this coloured her own views of life and duty. "Brought up in the austere school of Christian self-government," she took a severe view of men and things. The solemn charge of her dead father was ever present to her mind, and her one desire was to fulfil the trust she had

accepted from him to strengthen her weaker sisters. It is the misfortune of saints of this character that they are not content with living their own lives, but would fain impose on others the law they have accepted for themselves. Hence, with all that is admirable in Catherine, she was hardly the best-fitted companion for her husband in the hour when he so sorely needed the help of one whose own simplicity of trust might have given strength to his own faith. The story of the estrangement between two souls so full of love to one another is told with great truthfulness and pathos. The time came when the clouds cleared away, but the temporary misunderstanding was inevitable from the very nature of Catherine's mind. To any devout Christian spirit the trial must have been severe almost beyond possibility of endurance; but on Catherine it fell with special severity, because of her inability to appreciate the nature of the conflict which her husband had to fight, and to which his faith proved unequal.

A woman who had herself felt the touch of the scientific spirit, and had reasoned out some of the questions which disturbed Elsmere, might have done more to counteract the malign influence which from the first the Squire exercised over him. The fascination is not very easy to understand. We agree with Catherine when "she marvelled over the fascination Robert found in his dry cynical talk. She wondered that a Christian pastor could ever forget Mr. Wendover's antecedents; that the man who had nursed those sick children could forgive Mile End. All in all as they were to each other, she felt for the first time that she often understood her husband imperfectly. His mobility, his eagerness, were sometimes now a perplexity, even a pain to her." But we are certainly not less astonished at the rapid collapse of Robert Elsmere's faith under the attacks of this skilful antagonist; and we attribute it mainly to the absence of any living experience of a personal relation of the soul to Christ. In the struggle through which the young clergyman passed he had many a bitter agony, many an hour of intense suffering in the prospect of all that his change of view would mean to his parish, to

his life-work, to his friends, and, above all, to his wife. But we have not a hint of what would surely have been the most bitter trouble of any to a soul which had ever realized what a true fellowship with the living Christ is. This is only in accordance with the whole view that is given us of his religious history. To speak in the language of evangelical theology, we should say that there is no indication of conversion. Conviction of sin, the sense of personal unworthiness, conscious dependence on the Lord Jesus for forgiveness and for strength, are elements which do not seem to have had a place in his religious life. In an hour of spiritual emotion he gave himself to the service of the Church, and he was intensely anxious to fulfil the duties of the profession on which he had entered. He had that sense of responsibility for the parish which had been committed to his spiritual care which is so naturally developed in any clergyman who is at all alive to the duties of his office. He was a loyal son of the Church; an interested student and intelligent preacher of Scripture; so ardent a reformer and so deeply in sympathy with the weak, the afflicted and the suffering, as to draw down upon himself, as we have seen, the fierce anger of the Squire. But amid all these signs of earnestness of purpose and amiability of temper we find not a trace of that deep spiritual experience which we hold to be an essential part of true religion. Hence it was that when the powerful attack of the Squire was made there was no adequate force of resistance. The intellectual defences gave way mainly because there was not behind them that strength of spiritual experience in which sceptical doubts and difficulties would have met a power sufficient to check their fierce onslaught.

The argument of the Squire to which Robert Elsmere succumbed was simply based on the want of historic testimony for the Resurrection. We shall examine this in a subsequent article. Here we raise only one point. The result of the whole is to leave the hero with a Jesus—perfect indeed, but only a man—and he is made the centre of a new brotherhood of benevolent work. The question which we would raise is, Whence came this ideal man? We know

nothing of Jesus apart from the story in the Gospels, but their authority is already discredited by the elimination of the supernatural element. To us, indeed, the man is the most supernatural part of the whole. It is a great demand upon our credulity when we are asked to believe that the age in which the Gospels were written one of which miraculous stories such as we meet in them were natural products; but if more even than this is to be asked, and we are to believe that Jesus of Nazareth was the kind of character which it would have invented for itself, or would have honoured if He had appeared in its midst, the improbability approaches very nearly to impossibility.

That wondrous humanity is itself the strongest evidence of the Divinity, and the glory of the Lord's Godhead is never more transcendent than when we see it manifest amid all the sorrow and suffering of His humanity. The wearied wanderer who sat by the well at Sychar and asked for a draught of water to refresh His wearied frame, reads the secrets of the heart and life of the poor woman who stood before Him, and compels her to ask, Is not this the Christ? The Master, who sleeps while the storm is raging round, and the hearts of His disciples are quaking for fear, is no sooner roused from His slumbers than He lulls winds and waves to sleep, so that His companions, awakening to some understanding of His greatness, ask in wonder who it is that even the winds and the sea obey Him. So ever do the revelations of the God wait upon the signs of the reality of His manhood. The commonest needs of our nature are His—He hungers, He thirsts, He is faint and weary, He seeks the refreshment of sleep; but it is just as we realize how these every-day necessities bring us near to Him who was touched with a feeling of our infirmities that some wondrous manifestation of His eternal power and Godhead comes to remind us that we are in the presence of the mystery of Divine love—God manifest in the flesh.

But the closer study of the humanity does more for us than this, for the more fully it is understood the deeper is the impression on the heart that we are here in the presence of one who is more than man. The transcendent

beauty of the Lord's character is manifest even to the superficial observer, and has only been made more conspicuous by the failure of the impotent efforts which have been made by the malice of His most embittered foes to detect some flaw in its perfection. It was one, who saw in Him only a man, who wrote :

Jesus, there is no fairer name than Thine,  
Which time has blazoned on its wondrous scroll ;  
No wreaths or garlands ever did entwine  
So fair a temple of so vast a soul.

There every virtue set its triumph seal,  
Wisdom combined with truth and radiant grace  
In a bright copy Heaven to reveal,  
And stamp perfection on a mortal face.

The question which must force itself on a candid inquirer is as to how this perfection was attained, and it becomes all the more difficult to answer, the more complete our analysis of the character, and the more thorough our understanding of the circumstances under which it was developed. On both these points the researches of modern scholars have done much in the way of extending our knowledge. The "dry place" in which this flower of humanity blossomed has been carefully surveyed, and as the conditions of the soil and the character of the surroundings have been better understood, the marvel has become infinitely greater that this "plant of renown" should flourish, or indeed grow at all, amid circumstances so unpropitious. There was nothing in the traditions of the Jewish people, nothing in the religious ideas which prevailed at the time, nothing in the tone and temper of any part of the nation which could have suggested such an ideal as that which is presented to us in Jesus Christ. So far was it from being the natural product of the time or country, it is hardly too much to say that it would be hard to find a nation or an age less in sympathy with this wondrous combination of all that is noble and enduring in masculine strength, with all that is most winning in feminine tenderness.

## LECTURES ON THE HISTORY OF PREACHING.\*

DR. KER was through feeble health unable, for some years before his death, to discharge the ministerial duties of the pastorate. He was a preacher of rare excellence, combining in a high degree eloquent expression with discriminating, if not very profound, thought, and with practical urgency. His Presbyterian brethren were naturally unwilling to lose the service of his eloquence; so he was prevailed upon to accept, in the United Presbyterian Theological Hall in Glasgow, a quasi-professorship, intended more especially to prepare students for their preaching and pastoral work. This chair of "Practical Training for the Work of the Ministry" he occupied for ten years. And this volume embodies one of his courses of lectures. It does not, however, include the whole of his purpose—which contemplated a survey of the characteristics of the Christian pulpit in all branches and countries of the Reformed Church; but the defective state of Dr. Ker's MSS. has necessitated a very partial presentation of his Lectures. After the first seven lectures, which deal with the preaching history of the Church generally, prior to the Reformation, the rest of the volume is restricted to the preachers and preaching of the German Protestant Churches. The preachers of Great Britain, France, Scandinavia, Italy, and America, are altogether unnoticed. This gives a fragmentary and disappointing character to the volume. The preachers of England and France have, to say the least, been as eminent and influential as those of Germany; and we could well have spared some of the subordinate phases of German theological thought, for a descriptive estimate, in Dr. Ker's attractive style, of the great preachers of England and France. In a posthumous work, however, an editor can present only the material that is at his command, and readers of Dr. Ker's book will find it to possess great intrinsic interest.

\* *Lectures on the History of Preaching.* By the late Rev. JOHN KER, D.D. Edited by Rev. A. R. MACEWEN, M.A. Second Edition. (Hodder and Stoughton)

The Lectures take a kind of bird's eye view of the Christian pulpit. Necessarily they are succinct in statement and rapid in characterization; but we think that, even so, they might have been somewhat more incisive and discriminating. We frequently have the feeling of superficialness and vagueness, and fail to get an exact idea. Dr. Ker's eloquence is attractive, and sometimes he seems to yield unduly to its flow—sometimes the lecturer is lost in the preacher, and practical exhortation is unduly extended. This, however, is only a partial and a qualifying criticism. We meet with much that is penetrating in thought and terse in expression; as, for instance, "Christianity is orthodoxy *plus* charity." "If you ask the difference between a doctrine and a dogma, I should say it is this: A doctrine is a truth held for its practical value; a dogma is a truth held merely for its place in the creed. The dogma is *ut credam*, the doctrine is *ut vitam*." An acute distinction, but conventional rather than essential.

We cannot quite accord with Dr. Ker's claim for preaching, that, even as regular religious instruction, it is peculiar to Christianity. Preaching is only a species of oratory; and oratory as a means of propagating and enforcing ideas is probably coeval, and is certainly coextensive, with the race. The distinction between the occasional preacher, as in the patriarch or Jewish prophet, and the minister to a Presbyterian congregation, preaching to it two sermons every Sunday, is in no sense essential to the idea of preaching. Should not the distinctive features and diversities of preaching be sought rather in the special character of the religious cultus itself? Ritual religions like Judaism, Catholicism, and Anglicanism—to say nothing of Pagan religions—have but little need of preaching. They depend upon authority rather than upon moral persuasion. They deliver injunctions, they do not expound moral ideas or urge their appeal. Even in Judaism the function of the prophet was external to the Levitical economy. The place and power of preaching in any religious system will be regulated by the prominence given to moral appeal addressed to the individual conscience. No religion or

Church will wholly neglect preaching, in one form or another; but the kind of preaching and the place of preaching will be thus determined.

Hence in more spiritual days of the early Church, both Eastern and Western, great preachers arose, such as Origen, Basil, and Chrysostom in the Eastern Church; Cyprian, Ambrose, and Augustine in the Western Church. The contrast in the later developments of the two Churches is remarkable. In the Eastern Church preaching gradually decayed, until, at the present day, it is almost extinct. It has scarcely had a great preacher since Chrysostom. The two great causes of this have been its metaphysical polemics and its ritualism. The Western Church has had great preachers in almost every age, owing largely to its close contact and frequent conflicts with the most advanced thought of men. When her earlier and more spiritual days had degenerated, she had polemically to contend for her existence. There were Reformers before the Reformation, who for the most part sought to reform her by polemical preaching. Her polemical necessities therefore, as well as her spiritual ministry, called preachers into existence—some of them as great preachers as Christendom has produced. The Reformation was accomplished chiefly by preaching; so have been the achievements of subsequent evangelical revivals—that of Whitefield and Wesley especially. The prominence given to preaching in the Evangelical Free Churches of England and Scotland is often urged as a reproof against them by sacerdotal and ritual Anglicanism. But preaching is a necessary product of the basis upon which religion is made to rest. If upon mere ecclesiastical authority, the dictum of church or priest is sufficient; if the truth of Christ is to appeal to the intelligence and conscience of men, to “commend itself to every man’s conscience in the sight of God,” then the exposition and practical urgency of the preacher are imperative. In times of spiritual deadness, and in times of superstition, preaching will necessarily come into greater prominence, both as a means of spiritual awakening and as the polemical means of spiritual vindication. The normal service of spiritual worshippers is one thing, the evange-



lizing or reforming agencies of an apostle are another. Throughout religious history, from the old Jewish prophet to Christ and His apostles, and from apostolic times to the Methodist revival, preaching has come into prominence, just as spiritual necessities have been realized. The general rule, therefore, will hold good, that in proportion to the spirituality of a system—that is, to the dependence that it places upon the simple convincing power of truth addressed to the intelligence, conscience, and heart—will be the place and power of its preaching.

Dr. Ker's statement of the general idea of Christian preaching is, we venture to think, somewhat lacking in insight and breadth; the discrimination necessary includes much more than diversities of doctrine. Even in relation to these, he strikes us as being somewhat too conventional in his criteria of preaching. Clearly the methods of even orthodox Christian preachers must vary as greatly as the intellectual, social, and moral conditions of their auditors; and as the idiosyncrasies of preachers themselves. The effectiveness of preaching depends therefore upon two individualities—the individuality of the preacher and that of his audience; as even within the narrow limits of a common church life, and in the mutual fitness or unfitness of pastor and people, we are continually realizing. The diversities of natural character and life in the course and breadth of Christian history are immense. The methods of even a Chrysostom would be altogether unsuited to some social conditions. Men like Wycliffe, Savonarola, Luther, Jeremy Taylor, John Howe, Whitefield, Wesley, Carey, Williams, Moffat, would have been distinctive or even great men in any age; they were what they were because their respective social conditions moulded them. In judging the preaching of Christian history, therefore, we cannot prescribe rubrics, we need the very largest tolerance of methods; whatever in any given circumstances the best does the work of Christian preaching is the best. We insist only that the methods of the preacher shall not tend to vulgarize or despiritualize his auditors, that he shall stoop only so far as may be necessary to lift them.

It would be interesting to follow Dr. Ker in his survey of the preachers of the early Christian Church, as well as of those of Protestant Germany, or to select samples of his treatment; but he traverses the ground so rapidly, characterizes so briefly, and the field to be covered is so great and so varied, that this is simply impossible. He briefly indicates the changes in preaching that were wrought by the progress of civilization, the various developments of human thought, the vicissitudes of political power, and the diversities of social culture. He is careful to insist upon the essential importance of true doctrine as the basis of all religious appeal, as also of true holiness as the imperative fruit of all true doctrine. Whatever the diversity of operation there is only one spirit. For purposes of edification he points practical lessons from the phenomena that he has to survey.

We select two specimens of the latter. Speaking of the Eastern Church, he addresses himself to those who are seeking the unity of Christendom in Ecclesiastical Uniformity.

The political system of one great empire had led to the thought of a great external Church, with visible unity and an earthly head. To belong to this Church was to be within the pale of safety, and to be outside was to be lost. *Extra ecclesiam nulla salus*. This idea of outward unity, to be maintained at any cost, was asserted with persecuting violence, both in the East and the West, and it spread even into the churches of the Reformation. But when men came to see that the unity of the true Church is spiritual and invisible, that those who hold various views in separate communities may yet constitute the real Church of Christ, the chief reason for pushing polemics to physical force, and for excommunicating others from the body of Christ, disappears. We may organize ourselves separately for the sake of more harmonious worship and action; but we need not thereby unchristianize and unchurch one another, and so destroy that higher unity which comes of charity, and of the exchange of Christian service as far as this is possible. Those are chargeable with schism who exalt their outward unity into a denial of the Christianity of those who are not within it. And we may say that those also are guilty of schism who persist in remaining in a community when they have abandoned its principles. It is in the interests of love, as well as of

truth, that we should have separate communities, co-operating in a catholic spirit with one another. This is the "unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

After dealing with different types of pre-Reformation preachers, Dr. Ker thus wisely, if caustically, remarks on the "survival" of such in the present day.

We have the men who patch up sermons out of old Homiliaria, worth as little as if they were given in the Latin tongue—dull and dead, never passing beyond the ears of the people. We have the Scholastics, —men who deal with subjects that have no connection with life and practice, who ring the changes on syllogism and premiss and entity and etymological profundities, while "the hungry sheep look up and are not fed." We have not perhaps, in Scotland at least, the old-legend man, but in his room we have the modern question-of-the-day handler. What says so-and-so on some political or social topic—and the newspaper gets it to rehearse, advised of it by the careful author or some admiring friend. And we have the sensational advertiser and religious jester, as far as decency will now permit.

Historically, Dr. Ker's work is interesting; and practically, it is suggestive. Preachers may do far worse than make it, if not exactly a *vade mecum*, yet a careful study of the ends and methods of preaching as illustrated by examples.

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## CHESHUNT REVISITED

(1888).

ONE of the students of Cheshunt College, who stayed within its walls a considerably longer time than most of its students do, brought upon himself the joke that "he narrowly escaped seeing the Countess." Considering that the excellent Selina was laid to her rest at Ashby-de-la-Zouch in 1791, about eighty years before, the jest was not without boldness. But when in January of this year the old Cheshunt men came together, in Hall and College Chapel, to mingle prayers and memories at a place dear to them all, the spirit of the foundress might have been hovering near. The anxious spiritual face that looked down upon us

in the picture near the hall fire-place, seemed to be that of her ladyship in person, and her famous chaplain, George Whitefield, might have been near at hand. For the fountains of memory and imagination are at such times broken up, and the life of the past surges in upon the present in ampler streams. But it was only in imagination that we could stretch back so far as the troubled days of the eighteenth century in which the college was founded. The old preachers of evangelical doctrine, who had to break the law of England when they officiated at services arranged by the countess, were not there to tell the story of the "coercion" of that day and how they defied it. A hundred and fifty preachers were sent forth from the first home of the college at Trevecca, and of these not one is on the roll of the living. Among them was a John Clayton and a Matthew Wilks, and others of no mean note in their day; but the indelible erasure of death crosses every name.

From the English home of the college at Cheshunt some 420 men have passed during the time—now approaching a century—it has been open for students. Of these at least 150 are dead, a number equal to the entire lists of Trevecca. Sixty of the 420 students from Cheshunt have either been missionaries or preachers in other lands, and many were absent from the reunion because they are thousands of miles away, preaching in other tongues the wonderful works of God. During nearly a century of the college some twenty-six students appear to have connected themselves with the Establishment—some in the colonies; so that secessions to the State Church have not averaged more than one in three or four years. It should, of course, be remembered that Cheshunt College is absolutely undenominational, its students being free to choose in what denomination they will afterwards be ministers.

While, however, no reunion of public men could be expected to span a century, there was an unmistakable flavour of old days and associations in the gathering. Brethren were present who, without drawing a long bow, were yet able to tell a long story. None of them, in walks by Goff's oak, or in darkling rambles among the shrubs

that surround the pond, had ever caught glimpses of the foundress's "blest shade." But one of the old students present, Edward J. Evans, late missionary, left the college in 1851; another, distinguished alike by his position and his literary power, Henry Allon, of Union Chapel, left in 1843; while we had a letter from Kirby Moorside, written by John Abbs, late missionary, who left Cheshunt when the Duke of Wellington was declining to form a Government in 1834. There were some notable absentees; among them Henry Rogers, James Chalmers, George Turner (long of Samoa), James Gilmour, Professor Shearer, William Muirhead, Samuel Evans Meech, Ralph Wardlaw Thompson, Charles J. C. New, Robert Balmarnie, Edward Peter Rice. But from one of these, the sunny and heroic Chalmers, a letter was read, of date October 26, 1886, peremptorily ordering, so to speak, Dr. Reynolds to send him two Cheshunt men to New Guinea forthwith. Chalmers had just returned from visiting a tribe up the Williams river, who had murdered one of his native teachers last summer, while he was in England. Unarmed, and attended by only four natives, Chalmers went amongst them, and made peace by his good words and an exchange of presents. He now called for two Cheshunt men—"say, next May"—to go out to a field where such things have to be done. Ringing cheers greeted the letter, and no doubt men will be forthcoming.

Touching beyond words was the communion service in the college chapel. Gathered before the "eagles" of the reading desk and pulpit, where, in days of yore, we had essayed with trembling the reading of the service, and the sermons that cost us much labour of spirit, there seemed to be a reversal of the old conditions. We were not there to preach to the "Doctor," but to hear his affectionate voice addressing us. The gowns were off, the professional air lost, the critical attitude melted away, the heart open like a child's to take the counsel of the gentle and beloved man, who, having been for nearly thirty years pastor of preachers, has become through them in a sense the pastor of many churches. It was a new revelation of the beauty

of the Lord's Supper to see so many usually clothed with ministerial office, partaking of the bread and of the cup as simple members of the flock which was purchased with the precious blood of the Good Shepherd. It might do us good as ministers if we could oftener come together in worship and communion in the attitude of unofficial members of the Church.

Nearly every external element of the gathering bore marks of change. Men looked older or greyer. Touches of change—albeit beautifying change—appeared about the chapel. New pictures cheered the hall. The shelves of the beautiful library no longer gaped for books. The famous chestnut trees, whose fruit has been roasted far into the night by generations of men gathered in chatting groups by study fires, have suffered from recent storms. "Ichabod" is upon them. The New River, bounding the college grounds, under whose pellucid wave more than one Cheshunt man has experienced involuntary immersion, seems shallower, and less dangerous to the theological student, than in former days. In those brave times some Cheshunt men, since famous in the mission field, underwent on pond and river, a self-imposed training for their subsequent struggles with cataract, tide, and typhoon. Many were the hair-breadth 'scapes of boat, of bather, or of raft.

Miss Aldridge, for so many years the mother-like matron of the college, no more graced the board, or discussed with the older men the present level of preaching at the college chapel. A kindly resolution was sent to her from the dinner table by those present, some of whom, in the anxieties of a student's life, had been strengthened by her sensible and cheery words.

Yes, there was change everywhere. The doctor himself looked a little older, but we rejoiced to see how little older he did look, and how large a promise of future service in the college (which he has made what it is) his health and powers still gave. With sorrow we heard that his great helper in all work and care for the college, Mrs. Reynolds, had not been so strong as formerly. Few will ever know the extent of her personal contribution to the welfare of the

college, which she has served night and day, in sickness and in health, both by entering into her husband's thoughts, and by many original suggestions of her remarkable understanding.

We have traced change here, there, and almost everywhere. But in one direction we saw no change—or at least none resulting from failing faith or lowered tone. The “down-grade” tendency, so vividly perceived, and so startlingly described, from a prophet's watch-tower in Newington Butts, does not seem to have set in amongst Cheshunt men. If anything, faith seems fuller and firmer and more loving than in the days of student criticism and infallibility. Anderson, of Paris, told us how he meets the cynicism, now of fashionable, and now of Belville, infidelity by the story and the spirit of the Cross. Urijah Thomas, of Bristol, brought a loving moisture to the eye as he pictured the camps opened on the Mendips for the Bristol street arabs, and told us of the little fellow who fell asleep on his shoulder while he was praying for his mother, that she might be saved that night from the blows of a drunken husband.

Gathered about the fire, on Tuesday night, men's tongues seemed to be loosed in the freedom of old days; but no one could have discovered, from the prayers offered, from the paper read on the Burden and Glory of the Ministry, by T. R. Evans, of Brighton, or from the general conference that followed, that any disintegrating change had set in in the theology of Cheshunt men. Loyalty of belief in the incarnate Saviour marked every address. But besides loyalty of belief, loyalty of personal love, and loyalty of many-sided labour among the erring and the poor, shone out in every recital of the ministers' work. The doctrine could not have been far departed from, where there was such a manifest wish and endeavour to do the will of the Father.

The occasion of some saddening reflections, the college reunion was nevertheless full of comfort and joy. One present told how, of eighteen men of his year (1872), six have died; among them Cockin, at Hope Fountains,

Africa, and Dodghsun, at Ujiji, Central Africa, two young heroes of the Cross. Another was Hugh Rose Simpson, a youth of Highland blood, who had been a hearer and admirer of Alexander Raleigh's preaching, and who, had he lived, would himself have been a phenomenon in pulpit oratory. But he was smitten, like Hampden, on the Chalgrove Field of his career, before his rare abilities had found a stage for their full display. Such gaps in the prophet-line of the college became more visible on such a day. But soon "our voices took a higher range." Thoughts of loss and death fell into their proper unity with thoughts of trust and love for the Saviour, Who, if He has His "young men at the war," also "giveth His beloved sleep." It was all good together, the hearty hand-clasp of greeting, the tearful reminiscence, the prayers for more light and love, and the exhortation of one another to constancy in that which is our "reasonable service," the work of our early choice, the mission of our ripest powers, the object of our latest devotion.

J. HIRST HOLLOWELL.

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### CREED AND CONDUCT.

IN nothing is the change of atmosphere more conspicuous than in the impatience of creeds which is so marked a feature of our day, and one which demands the most careful study from all who aspire to influence the generation. It is not so much that there is an opposition to a particular creed or to some special dogmas, but a dislike to creeds in general, whatever the form they assume. To a large extent it is irrational and unintelligent, a mere prejudice which needs only to be challenged in order that its essential weakness may be made evident; but there is in it also another and better element. Its wild outbursts are often absurd enough and yet even in them may be heard an undertone of wise, and healthful protest against a tyranny by which hearts and



consciences have been too long oppressed. Under any conditions, it is a force which cannot be overlooked by any who would show understanding of the signs of the times. While such a temper is abroad nothing can be more useless than an endeavour to overawe the inquiring minds of this generation, already only too prone to rebel against authority by an appeal to authority. In their view creeds have been one of the chief hindrances to the progress of truth, sometimes darkening counsel by words without knowledge, at others restraining the action of living and growing forces by seeking to confine them within the fetters of human ignorance and weakness, and continually setting up man's interpretations as a supreme authority in the place of God's Word, and employing all kinds of tyranny and injustice to enforce its will. To multitudes, and among them are not a few of devout and pious temper, the creeds are associated with an outward and formal religion, are synonyms for a cold and heartless profession, behind which there may be neither faith nor love, are representative of a tyranny to which some of the noblest spirits of the Church and the world have fallen victims. They look around and see Christendom divided into sects and parties, and they find the secret of them in the exaggerated value ascribed to creeds. They see men who have one Lord, one faith, and one baptism, and who have to contend for this common faith in opposition to a world which regards it as foolishness, wasting, in struggles against each other for some article of a creed, the strength so sorely needed for the defence of that common faith which should be equally dear to all. They find in these men, regarded apart from their distinctions of creed, a wonderful unity of sentiment and experience, and yet they are as hopelessly divided as though they shared no sympathies, or hopes, or aims—and the separating influence is the creed. They turn their eyes back to history, and the darkest pages in the record are those which relate the conflicts between creeds, and portray the mutual suspicions engendered, and the bitter accusations hurled to and fro in the course of them. The evil thoughts and deeds which enter into these unhallowed

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strifes, the cruelty and violence, nay the falsehood and the fraud employed professedly in the cause of religion, and the dishonouring of the name of God Himself by its prostitution to the mere purposes of sect or party—these are the faults which men of this type lay to the creeds.

Of course there is not only much exaggeration in this, but there is also a fallacy which can only be corrected by careful definition. A slight incident which came within my own observation may illustrate this. A minister had been preaching on the sovereignty of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the duty of the Christian to yield absolute and entire obedience to Him. In enforcing this, the preacher naturally dwelt upon the power of love as the constraining motive and insisted on the breadth and comprehensiveness of the law of Christ as being the expression of love to Him. One of his hearers, a man of considerable intelligence, wrote gratefully acknowledging the stimulus which he had received, and added, "This is the kind of teaching which we need, and not a creed." The writer seemed wholly unconscious that apart from creed the sermon had no point and no authority. Behind all its representation of the Christian life lay the great doctrine that the author of that life was Christ, that the spring of all its love was faith in Him, and that if that was taken away, the teaching and exhortation had no foundation on which to rest. How the writer would have met this view may be doubtful. There are those who fancy that it is possible to separate the spiritual element of Christianity, its devout temper, its recognition of the supremacy of love, its self-suppression, its broad and generous human sympathy, as the kernel which can be retained, though the husk of dogma be thrown away. In other words, they seem to think it possible that we can dispense with the "Credo" altogether; and this is the issue to which a good deal of modern speculation leads, however unwilling its exponents might be to recognize the fact.

But this was probably not the drift of the writer of the letter. He was representative rather of a class which is tolerably numerous in the congregations both in church and chapel, who are wearied of theological subtleties, and are in

imminent danger, as the result, of coming to regard all religious belief with indifference. They plume themselves on being practical men, who judge by results, and as they can point to good men—men of large heart and generous purpose and holy life—who have been trained under all kinds of creeds, and what is still more convenient, as they have before them the suggestive contrast between men of no creed, whose lives are marked by righteousness and even goodness, and the votaries of the most orthodox creed, on whom they have exerted no ennobling influence, arrive at the conclusion that creed is nothing. The deduction is very hastily drawn from very insufficient premisses. But it is not difficult to understand how it has come to find acceptance. It is to be traced largely to the undue importance which has been ascribed to orthodoxy, and to orthodoxy not merely on the essential truths of the gospel, but on an entire scheme of dogma, assumed to be logically deducible from them.

If the reverence of men for doctrine is to be secured, it must be placed on a sound and defensible basis; that is, it must be shown that the truth has some direct relation to the spiritual life of men.

Value of a  
creed.

Were the rebellion against creed to give a rational and philosophical account of itself, it would probably be found that its root principle is a disbelief of the idea that a man will be accepted or rejected of God according to the particular opinions which he holds. In support of this view it might point to the remarkable declaration of Peter, in his address to Cornelius, "Of a truth, I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is acceptable unto Him." The answer to this surely is that even here a creed is assumed, for "He that cometh unto God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." But the efficiency of the reply is lessened by the fact that in an elaborate creed, truths which go to the root of a man's spiritual being and affect it at every point, are confounded with others which, though they may be deducible from the teaching of Scripture, have not this direct

and close relation to the life of the soul. A man cannot pray—that is, cannot come into contact with the heavenly Father, if he does not believe that God hears and answers prayer. There is no reason why he should love the Lord Jesus with heart and soul, unless he has learned that Jesus loved him and gave Himself for him. Strip the Saviour of His Divine nature and character, reduce Him to the level of humanity, even though it be humanity in a form so beautiful and perfect that it is absolutely unique, leave him only the attitudes of the wisest of teachers and the noblest of men, and in the process you have taken away the mighty power which He has had over human hearts and lives. Change of creed has produced a change of sentiment which involves an entire change of relation. Men do not worship dead teachers, however illustrious themselves, or however wise in their teachings. Plato and Xenophon have been the interpreters of Socrates, as the four Evangelists have been the exponents of the life and teachings of the Lord. The difference between the effects produced by these respective records marks the contrast between the feelings with which men regard the teacher who has passed away from them for ever, and the living Friend, the Divine Redeemer, who, though unseen, is yet felt to be continually present. The new religion of humanity has attempted to awaken on behalf of its founder something of the sentiment which centres round our Divine Master, but at best it is but a caricature. Its failure only confirms and strengthens the point, that it is only as the living Christ that our beloved Lord could have wielded that sway over the thoughts, the hearts, the consciences of men, which has extended all through the centuries, and which is as mighty to-day as when the simple word "Mary" led the trembling but rejoicing mourner to fall prostrate in reverence at His feet, or the appeal to Thomas swept away once and for ever any lingering doubt, and drew forth the cry of faith, "My Lord and my God." To-day men cannot see, and yet they can attain to a blessedness as great as that of Thomas. But it can be reached only through faith. Without the creed that "Him hath God

raised to the Saviour and Lord," the trust, the love, the worship, the joy, are simply impossible.

But when we go outside this central truth, or perhaps circle of truths, as much cannot be said. On all the questions connected with the relations of God there is room for endless inquiry and speculation, and it is not to be assumed that it is a matter of indifference whether we reach a right or a wrong conclusion in reference to them. But so far as the bearings on a man's own personal relation to Christ, soundness of opinion on these subordinate questions may be of very small moment, if of any moment at all. In the apostolic times one of the most prominent of these debatable points was the relation of the Christian converts to the Jewish dispensation. Judaizing teachers were continually urging that the Gentiles ought to accept the authority of Moses if they were to become followers of Christ. Here, surely, was a matter of serious consequence, and yet the apostle treats it as one in relation to which there must be perfect liberty. "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but faith working through love." That is the principle he applies everywhere, and by which he solves all difficulties. Let faith work by love, producing righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, and in reference to other points every man is to be fully persuaded in his own mind. The prejudice against creeds has been mainly caused by the departure from apostolic precedent. Elaborate schemes of doctrine have taken the place of the simple statements of truth which are found in the Epistles, and men have been required to accept every separate article of them. The inevitable reaction has come. For a long time men were imposed upon by the resolute assertion that they must receive all or they could receive nothing. To-day there are numbers who are prepared to accept the other side of the alternative, and to reject all rather than submit to a creed which contains propositions which do not commend themselves to their understandings, and which, whether true or false, are not of the things which make for edifying.



This tendency has been materially helped by the weak and misleading cry for unsectarianism which has been so prevalent of late years. It has undoubtedly had in it much that was to be admired. In its conception it was a protest against narrowness, bigotry, and exclusiveness, but it has rapidly degenerated, until now it has developed a fresh sectarianism of its own, which threatens to become more severe, intolerant, and narrow than that which it was intended to counteract. The "Evangelical Alliance" was meant to be an incarnation of its leading ideas, but, by a strange irony, that "Alliance," which was intended to unite the different sects, has of late become a disintegrating force, setting up a standard of its own, which, however reluctant its friends may be to confess it, is in reality nothing else than the flag of a new sect, intended to rally the supporters from all churches who accept its creed, and are not anxious to enforce the principles of the particular community to which they belong. Considering the past relation of the "Alliance" to Mr. Spurgeon, it may at first seem somewhat singular that this action should have been taken on his behalf, but a closer examination will diminish any surprise which this might cause. The dominating influence in the "Alliance" is that of the Evangelical party of the Church of England. Its power in its own Church is greatly lessened and circumscribed; it is all but ignored by the bench of Bishops, for though there are still two or three of the prelates who belong to it, they do not occupy a commanding position; its counsels are flouted in Convocation; the diminution of its power in Church Congresses is one of the conspicuous facts of the ecclesiastical situation. But in the Evangelical Alliance, as in some of the great "unsectarian" societies, it is still dominant, and wherever it has influence it is employed, on the one hand, to suppress all aggressive action against the Establishment, and to treat all who are parties to it as aliens from the commonwealth of the Evangelical Israel; and, on the other, to maintain an old-fashioned type of orthodoxy. In Mr. Spurgeon it sees a champion of this theology, who is all the more welcome because he has so



strongly impeached the Evangelical character of Dissenting churches.

Nothing could have less of that breadth of sympathy and tolerance of spirit in which is the essence of true unsectarianism. Even those who would have no hesitation in accepting its creed themselves, may reasonably object to the underlying suggestion that those who do not believe it are outside the lines of the Evangelical faith, and may still further demur to the assumption that Christian unity can only be maintained by silence as to points of difference. There is nothing noble, nothing magnanimous, nothing of loyalty to truth or charity, in such a policy as this; and when the question on which this suppression of individual testimony is to be enforced is one of such transcendent importance as the maintenance of the State Church, it is fraught with serious peril to Christian truth on every side. True charity can be widely tolerant even while it is firm and uncompromising in the maintenance of its own principles. It can honour men for their courageous assertion of what they hold to be true, even while it dissents from their opinions, and employs all the force of argument to overthrow them. It loves its own principles too well to make any concession or compromise, and what it would not give to others it scorns to ask from them. There can be nothing more fallacious than the notion that tolerance is identical with indifference or latitudinarianism, or the converse that bigotry is the evidence of deep-rooted attachment to principle. On the contrary, tolerance is a grand quality, possible only to him who has strong convictions, but who has been taught to respect the opinions of others by the very struggles through which he has reached his own. Such a man feels it simply impossible to be silent as to the faith which is in him, and he resents any attempt to allure him to such a surrender, however specious the pleas by which its true character may be hidden. But it is this, and nothing less, which is asked by those Churchmen who make their association with Dissenters contingent upon the abstention of the latter from action against the Establishment. The relation

is undoubtedly a delicate one, and one that requires forbearance, but that forbearance is as necessary on the one side as on the other. If the question were one of mere precedence, Dissenters might perhaps be asked to sacrifice their personal feelings and interests at the shrine of charity, though it would scarcely be seemly for such request to proceed from those who would themselves profit by this Christian magnanimity. But it is infinitely more than this, however hard it may be for Churchmen to understand it. As a question of social status it is not worth fighting, especially as all who are prominent in the fight can easily secure more social consideration by acquiescing in the present state of things. Only in so far as it is a matter of conscience is it worth the toil and struggle, the odium and obloquy, which invariably dog the steps of those who dare to set themselves against the currents of fashion and respectability, whether in the Church or in the world. There are Churchmen who attach supreme importance to the idea of a National Church, but the very earnestness with which they cling to this principle should help them to appreciate the corresponding intensity of conviction of those on the other side, to whom it means a perversion of the true conception of religion and an invasion of the sovereign rights of Christ in His own kingdom. Where differences of principle are so clear cut and sharply defined, neither can ask the other to forego the advocacy of his own views without an insult to his conscience and his self-respect. Tolerance may be equally difficult on both sides; certainly it is not the Dissenter, who has to submit to personal and social wrong, who has the smaller share of the sacrifice. But without its full exercise on both sides there can be no real charity, and any show of union must be utterly deceptive.

There is one effect of this "unsectarianism," however, which may scarcely have been perceived by some of its zealous advocates. They have only meant it to apply to lesser points of polity or of constitution—the questions which separate Churchmen from Dissenters, or different sections of Nonconformists from each other; but others

have not been content to accept these limitations, and the result has been a general loosening of the foundations of belief altogether. At first the disintegrating influences tell only on Church relations, and even there they are sufficiently mischievous. We have a number of people scattered up and down the country, who, if they were brought together, might form a little sect of superior persons. They belong to no church, and glory in their shame, fancying themselves (possibly after the fashion of the Christ-party in the Corinthian Church) the *élite* in the religious world because they are of no sect or party, and deceiving themselves into the belief that they are therefore, in some special sense, the servants of Christ. Forms and systems are in their mind matters of supreme indifference, and they show their impartiality by extending their patronage to all, except those whose fidelity to principle they brand as bigotry. They are "free lances," who owe allegiance to no church, but derive a certain *éclat* from a kind of loose and indefinite association with all.

The natural tendency of this Eclecticism is general scepticism. There are, of course, many who begin with the one who do not end in the other, their catholicity being nothing more than an amiable weakness, a distaste for the sterner virtues of the Christian character and the rougher duties of the Christian life, a love for saying and hearing only smooth things, a pleasure (of the peril of which the Lord's words have not sufficed to warn them) in hearing all men speak well of them. These sentimental weaknesses seriously diminish their force of character, but there is in them a salt of principle and of godly feeling which preserves them from the loss of faith to which this spiritual cowardice would otherwise lead. But there are others who lack this conservative force, and who, therefore, exemplify the truth of the Master's warning that "he that is unrighteous in a very little, is unrighteous also in much." They begin with a deprecating pity or a lofty scorn for all who are earnest about what they are pleased to regard as matters so trivial as hardly to deserve thought or call forth any exercise of conscience. They profess themselves unable

Dangers of  
Eclecticism.

to comprehend how sane men can concern themselves about the minutiae of sectarian differences. To them Episcopacy and Congregationalism, even Romanism and Protestantism, are much alike, and have done much the same service in the world by training godly men, somewhat differing from each other in type, but only presenting different phases of character, all of which are essential to the development of the full-grown man in Christ Jesus. They do not pause to consider how far fidelity to conscience has given the main element of strength to every one of these separate types, and how each would have been emasculated and robbed of its special beauty by failure to be true to the particular ideal which it had sought to cultivate. Denominationalism is to them narrowness and weakness, an excessive scrupulousness about trifles, an inability to rise to a broad and catholic conception of Christianity. There is no distinction made between a bigoted sectarianism, which will allow no difference even as to the tithing of the mint and anise and cummin, and has no charity for those who offend against any jot or tittle of its creed, and the conscientious but intelligent devotion to principle which, while it cannot tamper even with the least important truth, can yet discriminate between the essential and the subordinate parts of a creed or system, and in all its maintenance of the truth never forgets that he is its truest servant who speaks it always in love. Rather is it the earnestness of these men which is displeasing to Eclectics—those who, though they may hardly suspect it themselves, wish to cultivate a spirit of general indifference which cannot stop with mere questions of polity or ritual. The little leaven spreads until the whole is leavened by the corrupting idea that it is of little or no importance what a man believes, and that the sooner creeds are consigned to oblivion, and the attention fixed exclusively on conduct, the better for the real advancement of mankind.

For this contempt of creeds, therefore, very serious responsibility rests upon some who, in fact, occupy an extreme position on the opposite side. They have been anxious to assure the world that the points on which

Evil of  
extremes.

Christians differ are mere trifles, and they have succeeded to such an extent that the world has gone a step further, and is more than half persuaded that the things on which they agree may be trifles also. They did not contemplate any such result, and would regard it with aversion and alarm, but it was inevitable. Though they avowed indifference to a number of principles for which they might nevertheless have been expected to care, there were others for which they were ready to sacrifice everything; but it was folly to expect that their discrimination would be exercised by all who learned those lessons of charity which they were continually inculcating, and inculcating in such a way, and supporting by such arguments, as to put discredit upon the manly and courageous defence of principle. They are shocked at the signs of latitudinarianism, and are among the first to call for some decided action against its excesses. How far they are responsible for them, or how much they have done to foster the group of the evils they so fiercely denounce or so hopelessly deplore, are points of which they are entirely oblivious.

Take an example. A Nonconformist minister makes it his business to insist that the differences between Church and Dissent are so trivial that they are not worth discussing, especially if that discussion wounds the good men who adhere to the Establishment, and produces an alienation between them and Dissenters with whom they would otherwise have co-operated. At first such a condition seems to be amiability itself, but one who has no personal interest in the controversy, and who, it may be, has no living faith in Christianity, may very reasonably see it in a different light. "No serious differences between Church and Dissent," he may say; "then why dissent at all? It sounds eminently charitable to disavow all intention of injuring the State Church by word or deed, but if there be any reality in the profession, there should be no Dissent. For the injury is in the dissent. It is itself a protest against the Establishment, and such protest is an offence against Christian unity, unless it rest on strong and substantial grounds. If the difference be a mere fancy which can be

suppressed at pleasure or to suit the convenience or interest of the dissenter, it ought to be suppressed altogether. If a great principle is at stake, an entirely different complexion is put on the relations of the two parties. But great principles are not to be the sport and plaything of our personal inclinations and interests." The reply to such reasoning is not very obvious, but here we are concerned with it only as serving to indicate the effect of this trifling with Nonconformist principles upon minds already only too eager to shake off the control of Christian truth. Such men are only too apt to conclude that principles do not count for so much as they have been accustomed to think. In short, this excessive anxiety to bring about union, not by teaching men to respect each other's consciences, but by persuading one class to hold in abeyance their own beliefs in order to conciliate their opponents, has tended to undermine the strength of principle altogether.

Whatever the cause to which it is due, the result is not to be denied. There is a rebellion against the tyranny of creeds which has led in some to indifference, in others to a bitter hostility to dogma in every form. It would be fortunate did this mean nothing more than a dislike to modes of expression, an unwillingness to fetter the consciences of men by words which are themselves ever shifting in their meaning, an impatience of everything that may be a restraint on freedom of thought or utterance. With many this may be the case, while with others there is a mystical temper which holds that truth is injured by the attempt to confine its spiritual force within any verbal definitions. But it cannot be questioned that there is a not inconsiderable class whose aversion to creeds is an aversion to the supernatural teachings of Christianity. They are emphatically slow of heart to believe. They admire moral beauty, they have a sympathy with certain features in the Christian ideal, they reverence the character of the Master, but in Him as Saviour and Lord they do not believe. In short, they want a religion which does not make demands on faith, in utter forgetfulness that religion is concerned with a region which is known to us only through faith.

Such a state of mind is certainly not to be met by a Conservatism which insists that the work of the Church in the search after truth has been done centuries ago, that its creed (that is, the conclusions which were formulated hundreds of years ago by majorities in noisy councils) is of universal and permanent authority, and whatever is not of it cannot be of the truth, that though scientific discoveries or critical researches may modify our interpretation of scriptural teaching, the doctrinal system must be unaffected—in short, that the facts must be made to harmonize with the theory, not the theory with the facts; and if this cannot be, then so much the worse for the facts. Threats of excommunication will not affect men who glory in the idea that they are not the slaves of an orthodoxy which practically demands the renunciation of the mental faculties and the subjugation of heart and conscience to an authority which professes to represent the mind of past generations. To win them there must be an honest endeavour to understand their real standpoint, and meet their difficulties and objections, and those who undertake this are doing some of the noblest and best work of the generation. To discriminate between creeds which are at best but human attempts to set forth the truth of God and that living truth itself, to commend that truth in its native simplicity to the conscience, so that it shall take possession of the soul and rule there, is the only way by which to win back the allegiance of those who have wandered, or strengthen the faith of any who may be in perplexity and doubt. The man who honestly endeavours to do this is pretty sure to offend many a prejudice, and, it may be, lay himself open to many a suspicion; but in so far as he succeeds will prove himself a more wise and loyal servant of the truth than those whose boast is that they are free from the taint of new ideas, and adhere to the old creeds.

But the first step necessary to this is to show the vital connection between Christian faith and conduct. We live in a practical age which is specially disposed to accentuate the Lord's words, "Every tree is known by its fruits."



Men demand to be satisfied first that the fruits are good, and second, that being so, they are the product of faith in Christ, and apart from that could not be produced at all. It is impossible to ignore the existence of an impression prevalent in certain circles that the Christian ideal of character is imperfect, if not actually false, and that whatever good points may be in it are independent of the influence of its distinctive doctrines. On the latter point Matthew Arnold's teachings are very decided, and they have a subtle influence, especially in literary circles. "We do not acknowledge," it was observed to me, "any connection between religion and goodness." The remark is painfully suggestive as to the state of mind in a class which must have influence, and at the same time pregnant in solemn lessons to the teachers of Christianity. The worst is that it would require some hardihood to assert that there is nothing in the doctrine or life of the Church which may account for an idea which so absolutely mistakes the nature of religion and the aim of the teaching of the Master. It is the thought which the late Mr. Cotter Morison worked out in a volume, "The Service of God and the Service of Man," which not only misrepresented, sometimes in the most grotesque fashion, the principles and history of Christianity, but showed an absolute misconception of a central ethical truth. "If a man love not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" The apostle has anticipated the discovery of the doctrine of the new religion of humanity as interpreted by Mr. Cotter Morison. It is the apostle who had caught most of his Master's spirit who thus teaches that without service to man there can be no service to God, and who in doing so only carries out the Lord's own doctrine as expounded in His parables, in His conversations with the rich young man and the inquiring lawyer, and, above all, in the principle of separation between the sheep and the goats in the final judgment: "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me."



### THE PERIL OF ORTHODOXY.\*

THERE is so much in the following remarks in an Editorial of *The Andover Review* for May that are suited to the state of opinion in this country at present, that we gladly extract them:—

A religious journal whose sincerity we respect has recently charged the "new theology" with partiality for theories which "destroy" the "foundations" in which the righteous trust. This accusation is supported in part by the remark that *The Andover Review* recognizes no "substantial issue" as surviving between men of the new school and promoters of old and fundamental errors, and particularly lifts up no "note of warning or of protest . . . to the propaganda against which Edward Dorr Griffin and Lyman Beecher, and others, not a few, in their day, thundered in pulpit and in press alike. But we do find multiplied . . . pages devoted to the building up of the newer hypotheses."

It were easy to reply that both of the divines who are named were prominent in their use of "improvements" in theology, and if they were living now would certainly not be occupied in fighting old battles. We might also appeal to the pages of this REVIEW as affording abundant evidence of the purpose of its conductors to maintain the principles and mark the signs of a truly Biblical and vital Christianity. We have combined from the beginning discussions of fundamental principles with accounts of their practical application. No other general Review has so systematically, thoroughly, and constantly exhibited in its motive, methods, and results that work which pre-eminently expresses a living Christianity, the missionary service. If we have been constrained to oppose men with whom we are, to use our critic's words, "denominationally classified," this is not because we value less than they the fundamental truths we hold in common, but because we believe that some of their inferences and methods repel men from

\* From *The Andover Review*.

Christianity and hinder its progress. Our interest in a particular "hypothesis" lies mainly in its practical importance from this point of view. We are doing what we can to promote its intelligent discussion because we are convinced that in this way obstacles to missionary success will be removed, and leading doctrines of Christianity gain in clearness, simplicity, and fulness of statement.

Our present purpose, however, is not to reply to the criticism we have cited, but to present some thoughts started by its perusal. We will first, however, quote a little further, continuing the citation already begun :

Variant from the teachings of the fathers who kept ever close to the New Testament teachings, they [*i.e.*, "the newer hypotheses"] are so variant in fact to the view of a host comprising the whole truly evangelical army, and embracing as much and more of sound learning, and of diffused knowledge in the churches as ever existed—as to become quite "another gospel." . . . But while we thus write . . . there is over the mind of the writer no element nor cloud of misgiving as to the future of "pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father."

We need not prolong the extract. The writer is defined. You see him. You recognize him as an old acquaintance. You have met him many times on the page of history. Paul encountered him in every synagogue. No sooner had the church assumed form than he tried to turn its creed into a law, its sacraments into ordinances, its councils into courts. He flourished in the days of the Inquisition. He has been in the main a good man; he has loved the truth which he has fought for; he has meant to be faithful; but you know that he will fail to understand those with whom he does not agree, and that time and time again he has substituted opinion for doctrine, and failed to speak for God according to the proportion of his faith.

We have expressed on a former occasion our appreciation of the value of the epithet "orthodox." In pointing out now its exposure and perversion we do not disparage it. In this world light ever has its shadow, goodness its perils. Every community or fellowship, as well as every member

of it, has an easily besetting sin. Orthodoxy can claim no exemption from the common law, even when the word is interpreted in its noblest sense. In its merely ecclesiastical sense it has little value for our time, which cares more for truth according to a permanent religious standard than for an accredited soundness of opinion according to the judgment of some transient synod or particular age.

Webster defines orthodoxy as "soundness of faith; a belief in the genuine doctrines taught in the Scriptures," which gives to the word its best sense from the Protestant, not to say Puritan, point of view. Worcester is truer to the etymology of the word when he explains it to mean "soundness in opinion and doctrine, particularly in matters of religion." Neither gives the ecclesiastical meaning—which we dismiss. The difference in definition between the two lexicographers indicates the greatest peril of orthodoxy, the substitution of opinion for faith. Orthodoxy is constantly in danger of construing matters of opinion as articles of belief, and an acceptance of these opinions as an exercise, or an indispensable part, of a genuine faith. We have nothing to say against creeds, rightly formed, and put to their proper uses. Christianity is truth. It has doctrines which should be taught. A gospel which cannot be preached as true, which does not command human thought, which is not susceptible of articulate statement, is not apostolic nor Divine. Theology itself is a direct and legitimate outgrowth of Christianity, and a genuine interest of the Christian Church. But a veritable Christian doctrine is always a fact and truth of spiritual life, and a necessary element in its full realization. It is a perception of a permanent reality—of something in the realm of being and of personality which has enduring value. It is not a transient opinion, helpful in the search after truth, but food and drink to the reason, though it be but a crumb or a drop. It has in it a lasting authority, one that can never be outgrown. It can always be translated into the form of a personal faith in a personal God, authoritatively revealed; and is as immutable in principle, however expansive in range and form, as his

being and will. Orthodoxy is constantly in danger of losing this conception of Christian doctrine. It maintains propositions that have lost their connection with religious faith. It uses these propositions as though they were complete premises, and competent to guarantee the validity of all that may be deduced from them. Then it compacts this mass of abstractions and inferences into what it calls a Confession of Faith, and presents it to the world as an epitome of that Divine revelation which is throughout historical and personal, and as the necessary knowledge of all who would be men in Christ Jesus. The history of creeds is a most instructive one in this aspect. At the Council of Jerusalem (Acts xv.) the Apostles and the Church agreed in the confession that salvation is by faith in Jesus, and not by the law. The religious relation to God came to the front. Rules of conduct which were agreed upon were dictates of wisdom in maintaining this relation and removing obstacles to its universal ascendancy. The first creed which appears—substantially our Apostles' Creed—is a personal confession of faith, and deals throughout with personal relations as defined by the revelation of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Heresies arose, that is, teachings which were inconsistent with the truths involved in this confession. The personal confession became a congregational confession. It proceeded to state truth as opposed to what was regarded as error. The antagonism was still kept in the form of faith, the faith of the Church. Piety declined and errors increased. The confession of a Saviour in the events of His historic revelation passed over into formulas respecting the "two natures" and their relations. Still, the one Person was predominant; but the main interest was concentrating on a right definition of the relations of the natures, rather than on the spiritual qualities manifested through those natures, and the ineffably glorious personality in which they were harmoniously united. Discussion about Christ wandered away from Christ into the sphere of mere opinion. The Creed was interpreted into this form of theology or that. Parties grew up and lived in mutual

hate and ripened into sects. The East split into fragments and became lawful prey to the followers of the prophet of the Divine Oneness. The West exalted a matter of opinion into an article of faith, put it into a creed, made it a test of orthodoxy, and split from the East, each part excommunicating the other in the name of orthodoxy. Orthodoxy was one thing in Old Rome, another in New Rome, another in Armenia, another in Persia. When the ecclesiastical unity of Western Christendom was broken up under the pressure of a new and powerful religious reformation it was natural that new creeds should arise. But it was impossible, even with the fresh inspiration which had been gained by repairing to the living fountains of truth in the Scriptures, to reverse or wholly discard methods and habits of thought which had been growing for centuries. The new confessions became more and more bodies of divinity, summaries of doctrine in its theological, systematic, and polemic form, elaborate statements forged in the schools and useful as mailed armour, but fitted to impress men with the conviction that Christianity is more than all things else a great storehouse of logical truth, a "scheme" or "system" of Divine thought which it is our principal business first to master and then to be governed by. The method pursued where religious life was most intense and concentrated is specially noteworthy. The Creed was left to stand by itself. Personal consecration and devotion assumed the form of a covenant. Nothing marks more significantly than this separation of creed and covenant how fully orthodoxy had become soundness in opinion rather than soundness in faith, and this all the more because the immense change which had been wrought was not mistrusted. The sixteenth century has been called the age of Confessions, the seventeenth that of orthodoxy. The eighteenth showed the legitimate result of an orthodoxy of opinion. Semler summed it up when he treated every Christian doctrine as the "opinion of some teacher,"—*sententia alicujus doctoris*,—and divorced faith from truth. The

name of the theologian of the Mediæval Church who most exalted logic is preserved in our word *dunce*. The church that introduced into its calendar "Orthodoxy Sunday" has produced nothing since. If there has been to some degree in the nineteenth century a repristination of the standards of the sixteenth, and a recovery from the rationalism of the eighteenth, it is due to a revival of the religious faith of the Reformers and a rejection of most of the shibboleths of the orthodoxy of their successors. The history of creeds is thus a demonstration on a large scale that an orthodoxy of faith is liable to become an orthodoxy of opinion, and that the temptation is a deadly peril. The moment a doctrine, no matter how high and sacred, no matter how imposingly promulgated, receives a form which makes it indifferent to the religious life and capable of acceptance without the exercise of a spiritual faith, it is dead, and the orthodoxy which continues to assert it is simply playing into the hands of unbelief and irreligion.

The injurious influences that emanate from an orthodoxy of opinion, as distinct from an orthodoxy of Christian faith, are innumerable. It not only perpetuates ignorance of religious truth, but exalts this nescience to the rank of a virtue. It makes of sectarian narrowness and partisan blindness a sacred obligation, a service to religion, a fidelity to God. We have no sympathy with religious indifferentism. Tolerance of opinions in another which a man's own reason and conscience repudiate as religiously harmful should never go beyond a full recognition of his personal rights. There is no intolerance if one does not choose as his intimate friend a neighbour whose principles he cannot approve. But the orthodoxy of opinion is intolerant of other religious opinions, not because it sees them to be religiously harmful, or unchristian, but because they clash with its own opinions of what is religious, opinions which it has never tested by any genuine process and standard of faith. It makes of opinion a universal law, and invests it with the authority of a "Thus saith the Lord."

Of course, it is often very unjust. Mere prejudice dictates its conclusions. And since it is filled with the notion that it is steadying the ark, or defending the faith, or staying the progress of baneful error, and is doing this in faithfulness to a commission it has received from heaven, its tone is authoritative and judicial. The orthodoxy of faith draws into its severest strain of rebuke something of the meekness and gentleness of the Christ in whom it believes, and at whose sacred feet it humbly sits waiting for his word. The orthodoxy of opinion loses this personal inspiration of truth and love, mounts the judgment-seat, puts on the black cap, and turns judgment into anathema. Oh, the mischief of it,—the souls repelled from truth, the widespread misconception of what the gospel of Christ really is, the unseemly strifes and divisions, the repression of inquiry, the stifling of thought, the murder of love!

Do our words seem to any reader severe? We can only say that, born, educated, always living within the circles of Orthodoxy, we have been more severe with ourselves than in anything here penned. We prize beyond measure the historic continuity of the Christian faith, the constants of doctrine amid all the variables, intellectual character and stability. But we have learned, however imperfectly, yet truly and profoundly, that there can be no safe judgment of another's doctrine that tests it by an orthodoxy of opinion.

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## A TRIP TO THE EAST.

### I.

It is now just two years ago since I made a trip to the East. In my journeyings I was accompanied by a younger brother, who is now, alas! no more. How swiftly Time flies, and what strange and varying changes he brings in his train—evils no less than blessings, pleasures as well as pains! Well may we echo the words of the accomplished wife of the historian, Mr. Grote, and say: "How few of us are ever permitted to *run out* any given course of life!

All human life is made up of chapters, short or long, as it may be. But few lives represent an unbroken volume!" Two short years ago my brother was in the enjoyment of the best of health, and seemed as if he were only just beginning to engage in the battle of life. He was possessed of all the vigour of early manhood, and death was the last thought that would have suggested itself to any one in connection with his name. At the time of which I write he would be about five and twenty years of age, whilst I was some seven or eight years his senior.

It was by no means the first occasion on which we had travelled together. Indeed there was scarcely a country in Europe that we had not visited in each other's company, so that *solitude à deux* had become quite a habit with us. And his journeyings had been still more extensive than mine. He had always been fond of the excitement that travel affords, and was able to say that he had visited either hemisphere and set foot on each of the four continents. The rover has now for ever ceased from his wanderings, and has found rest at last in "the undiscover'd country, from whose bourn no traveller returns."

But as yet all was brightness and sunshine, and coming events cast no shadow before. The future was mercifully veiled from our sight.

Heav'n from all creatures hides the book of Fate,  
All but the page prescrib'd, their present state :  
From brutes what men, from men what spirits know :  
Or who could suffer Being here below ?

Acting in accordance with our usual practice, the advantages of which experience had taught us, we formed no fixed and settled plans as to the precise route that we should take, and, indeed, had decided little beyond the single point that we should make with all convenient speed for Cairo. On Tuesday, January 26th, we went to London with some intention of proceeding thence to Marseilles, in order that we might travel by one of the Messageries steamers to Alexandria. We were, however, detained for a little while in town by the keen interest that we took in



the political events that were at that time taking place. Tuesday, January 26, 1886, will long be remembered as the day that witnessed the overthrow of Lord Salisbury's first administration. We were fortunate enough to obtain seats in the Speaker's gallery, whence we followed with much interest what proved to be an exciting and memorable debate. The subject of discussion was Mr. Jesse Collings's amendment to the Address, dealing with what was for the moment the lively and burning topic of "three acres and a cow." Little did the guileless and ingenuous author of the amendment comprehend the real nature of the issue he was raising. Rumour had it that in his extreme anxiety to produce an acceptable form of words he had taken his friend Mr. Labouchere into his confidence, and had consulted him with respect to the drafting of his resolution. When the question was one of confidence or no confidence in a Conservative administration, the Radical member for Northampton was not likely to stickle about words. Nor did he on this particular occasion show that he was in any way difficult to please. With that frank and merciless cynicism which has become a second nature with him, he is said to have replied, "My dear Collings, do you think anybody takes you and your cow seriously? Any assortment of words, my dear fellow, will do, provided only they conform to the rules of English composition. Those you have chosen are unfortunately defective in this particular, but they can soon be put right." Put right, accordingly, they were, with a result that soon became apparent. In due course they were handed in to the clerk at the table, were read by the Speaker from the Chair, and, on being put to the vote, were found to have been carried by a decisive majority of the newly-elected House of Commons. Such was the apparently insignificant occasion of what may yet prove to be an important turning-point in our national history. From this debate the historian of the future will in all probability date the commencement of a silent and peaceful revolution in the constitution of the country.

*Magnus ab integro sæclorum nascitur ordo.*

The crisis was acute, but in a very short time events began to shape themselves. A new Government was in process of formation, and some delay was inevitable before Parliament could again meet for the despatch of public business. There was no longer any reason why we should postpone the date of our departure. For the immediate future we must be content to watch, as best we might, from distant lands, the progress of events. Accordingly, on Saturday, January 30th, we crossed the channel, and after halting for a rest at Paris, arrived in Genoa, in time to embark on board the Florio-Rubattino steamship *Asia* on the Monday following. The sail to Alexandria was uneventful, and the eight days during which it lasted glided rapidly away. There were few passengers on board, and these were for the most part our own countrymen. Doubtless from each of them much might have been learned, if one had only had the energy and the tact necessary to elicit the information. To be always learning is the special note and characteristic of genius, and there are few modes of learning more profitable and delightful than that which conversation affords. Of Shakespeare we are told that "he was indeed honest, and of an open and free nature," and much of his worldly wisdom and wide-reaching knowledge is doubtless traceable to the fact that he was a man of an affable and social disposition. Dr. Johnson, again, preferred any company, any employment whatever, to being alone; and he was accustomed to say that the great business of his life was to escape from himself. To Mrs. Piozzi he wrote, "Take all opportunities of learning that offer themselves"; and his advice to Boswell was, "when moving about to read diligently the great book of mankind." I know of no one who acted more fully and completely in accordance with the letter and the spirit of this advice than did Sir Walter Scott, and of him it was said, "Sir Walter speaks to every man as if they were blood relations." Once more, the great scholar Porson had a voracious appetite for knowledge, and is reported to have exclaimed, "If I had a carriage, and if I saw a well-dressed person on the road, I would always

invite him in and learn of him what I could." But with all these noble examples before me, pointing out to me the way in which I should go, I must confess that on the occasion of this particular voyage from Genoa to Alexandria I was not in a very talkative frame of mind. As the good ship steamed along the coast of Italy I buried myself in the pages of my favourite poems, the *Odyssey* and the *Æneid*, and read once again the soul-stirring story of "The Last Days of Pompeii." My brother was blessed with a happier and more sociable disposition, and was soon "hail, fellow! well met" with all the companions of our voyage, so that whilst he was universally regarded as the liveliest member of the party, I have little doubt that with equal unanimity I was voted the quietest, dullest, and heaviest man on board. How much I lost by my habit of seclusion and retirement may perhaps be gathered from a slight sample of the conversation of one amongst our number. He was clearly a man who held strong convictions, and he was assuredly entitled to the praise of not being afraid to give expression to them. He was travelling for the benefit of his health, but he was the last man in the world to allow bodily affliction to prevent him from discharging what he regarded as his duty to his Queen and to his country. A good Tory, he was, like Dr. Johnson, a good hater. Above all things on the earth, or under it, he hated, as a matter of course, Mr. Gladstone; and, anxious as he had been to leave England at an earlier date, he had stayed at home in order to have the supreme satisfaction of "voting against that pig, Arch." It will readily be believed that I did not deem it necessary to prolong the conversation into the small hours of the morning. Reflecting that an Englishman does not travel abroad to see Englishmen, I retired to my cabin.

I have said that our voyage out to Egypt was uneventful, but it was marked by one incident that ought not to go unrecorded. As we were passing through the Straits of Messina—between the fatal Scylla and the still more fatal Charybdis—one of the crew fell overboard. Fortunately for him, he could swim, and the tide, which runs very

rapidly through the Straits, assisted him greatly. Life buoys were thrown out, boats were lowered, and, in less than fifteen minutes, he was rescued and brought on board again alive, having been snatched from the very jaws of death.

We arrived at Alexandria about noon on Tuesday, February 9th, and, as we were to leave in the evening by the express train for Cairo, we lost no time in setting about seeing such sights as the city affords. A drive round the city and along the banks of the Mahmoudieh Canal was a pleasant change after seven or eight days at sea. Four years had passed since I had been at Alexandria before, and in that interval many important events had taken place. The bombardment of the forts and the burning of the city had wrought havoc and devastation on every hand, but the process of recovery had been rapid, and the traces of destruction had been one by one obliterated. Many parts of the city had been completely rebuilt, and rebuilt in a fashion which inevitably compelled the reflection that in the dispensations of Providence there are compensations attached even to the most terrible scourges of humanity—war, pestilence, and famine. One of the most pitiful sights that met our gaze as we drove through the city was a mournful procession of captives, for the most part Nubians from the desert, who, with chains round their legs, were being marched off to prison. It was a sight that would have brought tears to the eyes of the sentimental traveller and constrained him once more to exclaim: "Disguise thyself as thou wilt, still, Slavery, still thou art a bitter draught! and though thousands in all ages have been made to drink thee, thou art no less bitter on that account. 'Tis thou, O Liberty, thrice sweet and gracious goddess, whom all in public or in private worship, whose taste is grateful, and ever will be so, till Nature herself shall change."

The sight of the prisoners was sorrowful enough, but there was no possibility of bringing them relief, and the voice of reason seemed to whisper in our ears that there was no use in adding to the sum of human misery by

making ourselves uneasy on their account. Accordingly, the thought of them soon slipped away from the memory, the wants of the natural man were in no degree neglected, and, strange as it may appear, when we sat down at table to snatch an early dinner before taking our departure for Cairo, our appetites were discovered to have been in no way appreciably affected. We reached Cairo at 10 p.m., and were soon installed in very comfortable quarters in Shepherd's most excellent but, at the same time, most expensive hotel!

Cairo we found to be swarming with military men, who crowded everywhere. For weeks to come all the places in the Nile steamers were taken, so that we were reluctantly compelled to abandon the idea of travelling in the interior of the country. What was to be done? We were not long in coming to a conclusion on the point.

As circumstances did not admit of our seeing Egypt to advantage, we resolved to try whether we should fare any better in Syria. Accordingly, we determined to devote a few days to sight-seeing in Cairo, and then to set out for Palestine.

In Cairo the approved method of locomotion is on a donkey's back. At Rome, we are told, we should do as the Romans do, and the same principle may with equal advantage and propriety be extended to Cairo. Beyond a trifling loss of personal dignity and an occasional spill on the dry sandy soil with which the streets are strewn, no danger or inconvenience need be apprehended. Even in the most crowded thoroughfares you tear along at a rattling pace, and the excitement at times is of an extremely exhilarating kind. Wonderful to relate, the donkey-boys are quite as useful and quite as interesting as the donkeys themselves. They are always on the alert, and with their shouts clear a pathway for you in such a mysterious and magical fashion that it might seem as if it was they and not the donkeys that wafted you along. Nor is their conversation without a charm and an interest of its own. My favourite amongst them was Abdurrahman, whose acquaintance I had made on the occasion of my previous

visit. His personal history was typical of the habits and customs of the East. He had married, he told us, at fourteen, and had given £10 for his wife. If he desired it, he could, he said, send his wife back and get another in her place, on payment of a larger sum of money. He had a daughter who was over twenty years of age, and was married. But arithmetic, as may be readily believed, was not poor Abdurrahman's forte. He did not even know his own age. For aught he knew, he might be thirty, or thirty-five, or forty years of age. "Me know not," said he; "my Mahomet only knows. Allah knows everything." Imperfect, however, as was his understanding of the mysteries of arithmetic, he yet knew enough about the science to feel very keenly the weight of the burden that he was called upon by the Egyptian Government to bear. He was himself taxed £1 a year, and in addition he paid 5s. per annum for each of his sons, and 6s. for each of his donkeys. He had never himself been to school, but he was anxious that his children should go. They, however, did not view the matter in the same light, and though he did not forget to thrash them, they were constantly running away. Every morning at five o'clock he went to the mosque to pray, but his family had not yet begun to follow their father's most excellent example.

Under Abdurrahman's guidance we visited the principal sights of Cairo and the country around. First of all we ascended the citadel in order that we might take in at a glance the geography of the city and the district. Few views are more interesting or more impressive. To the east the eye catches sight of the solitary obelisk which is all that remains of the ancient City of the Sun; at our feet lie old and new Cairo, with their hundreds of mosques and thousands of glittering minarets. Westwards rise in lonely grandeur the pyramids of Gizeh and of Sakkara, and far as the eye can see there winds through the desert the fertilizing stream of the Nile. Descending from the citadel we make innumerable excursions into the interior of the city. One after another the world-famed mosques are visited, but none awakens such keen and living interest

as does the mosque of El Azhar. This is the university for all Islam, and here hundreds of students may be seen seated on the ground and swaying themselves to and fro as they recite or learn by heart passages from the Law and the Koran. The peculiarity of the teaching appears to be that it is almost entirely of an oral character. As a consequence, it may be doubted whether the memory is not often trained at the expense of the judgment.

Short as our stay at Cairo was destined to be, we could not, of course, for a moment think of taking our departure until we had ascended the pyramid of Cheops. The building of this pyramid is said to have employed one hundred thousand men for the space of twenty years about forty centuries ago. It was once faced quite smooth, but it is now rough and uneven, and presents about a couple of hundred steps, from one to four feet high, by which the ascent is made. By the expenditure of much backsheesh and of a proportionate amount of labour and of toil the summit at length is reached. The view is to some extent the same as that which is to be obtained from the citadel, but westward little except the desert and the neighbouring pyramid of Chephren can be seen.

When you have yourself ascended the pyramid of Cheops, and have ascended by deputy the more difficult and well-nigh impracticable pyramid of Chephren, the Sphinx immediately arrests your gaze and claims your attention. Time has sadly marred the perfection of his visage, but after the lapse of centuries he is solemn and eloquent and impressive as of yore. "Laugh and mock if you will," writes the author of "Eothen," "at the worship of stone idols; but mark ye this, ye breakers of images, that in one regard, the stone idol bears awful semblance of Deity—unchangefulness in the midst of change—the same seeming will and intent for ever and ever inexorable! Upon ancient dynasties of Ethiopian and Egyptian kings—upon Greek and Roman, upon Arab and Ottoman conquerors, upon Napoleon dreaming of an Eastern empire—upon battle and pestilence—upon the ceaseless misery of the Egyptian race—upon keen-eyed travellers—Hero-



dotus yesterday and Warburton to-day,—upon all and more, this unworldly Sphinx has watched, and watched like a Providence, with the same earnest eyes, and the same sad, tranquil mien. And we, we shall die, and Islam will wither away; and the Englishman, straining far over to hold his loved India, will plant a firm foot on the banks of the Nile, and sit in the seats of the Faithful, and still that sleepless rock will lie watching and watching the works of the new busy race, with those same sad earnest eyes and the same tranquil mien everlasting. You dare not mock at the Sphinx."

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#### MR. GLADSTONE AT THE MEMORIAL HALL.

THE criticism which the magnificent demonstration of Nonconformist ministers on behalf of Mr. Gladstone and his Irish policy has provoked, was all discounted before hand. There are some journals, especially those of the meaner sort, which dislike Nonconformists, many which detest Mr. Gladstone, some which have a distinct antipathy to both, and to the whole of them this has been an admirable opportunity for gratifying their amiable sentiments. It is not necessary to reply to them in detail, but the bitterness of *The Christian World* demands a passing word. Why, of all our newspaper critics, it should be the one that thinks it necessary to suggest that the enthusiasm of Dissenting ministers has betrayed them into what is worse than folly—positive insincerity—is not obvious, but the suggestion betrays a curious ignorance of the effects of true enthusiasm, which may make men fanatical, but will certainly not make them insincere. Insinuations of this kind should be left to the enemies of religion and Liberalism of every kind. There are plenty of these in the world, and those who profess to care for both may surely leave them to do this kind of work. There is some consolation even in such an article. Congregationalists have been exposed to no little criticism on the supposition that *The*



*Christian World* is their organ, and it has been very difficult to convince outsiders to the contrary. Such a belief can hardly survive the article on the meeting in the Memorial Hall. That shows it is as much out of touch with the politics as the answer to Dr. Bruce's appeal proved that it was out of sympathy with the theology of the majority.

Happily, Mr. Balfour has condensed the bitterness which has been exhibited in so many quarters into one or two sentences, framed in his own characteristic style. It is, of course, no matter of surprise that the author of "Philosophic Doubt" should round one of his paragraphs with a sneer at the association of politics with our holy religion. The relations between Mr. Gladstone and the Nonconformists are to him utterly unintelligible. But even he finds no ground on which to base any charge of interested motives. He can only scoff at what, in his view, is doubtless a very improper interference of Christian ministers with his policy. The representative of a Ministry which has called on the Pope to help it in suppressing the National League, he has yet the effrontery to indulge in gibes and jeers at a large body of English ministers for the free and honest expression of their opinion. The very head and front of our offending is that we have dared to express our sympathy with Irishmen under oppression, and with the veteran statesman who has wrecked his own political prospects in order that he might redress the wrong. We have made no conditions and we cherish no expectations of political advantage to ourselves from our support of what we believe to be right. Not from us has the complaint come that Mr. Gladstone said nothing about Disestablishment in his great speech at the Memorial Hall. We were not so foolish as to suppose, or so selfish as to ask, that a statesman in his seventy-ninth year, in the midst of the most arduous struggle which has been waged for many a long day, would announce his intention to enter on another scarcely if at all less formidable. Certainly no anticipation so unreasonable has been entertained by us, and if we get credit for nothing else, at least we may be admitted to be disinterested.

"But you are fulsome in your eulogy and cannot be sincere." So say Mr. Balfour and our critics generally. There is a very notable exception in the case of *The Spectator*, which is Unionist among Unionists; but yet with a candour which reminds us of its better days, frankly admits that the relations between Mr. Gladstone and the Nonconformists are creditable to both. In other words, we believe Mr. Gladstone to be a Christian statesman, who cares for principles rather than place, and values office mainly for the opportunity it affords him of advancing principles. We can imagine the incredulous laugh which will curl Mr. Balfour's lip as he listens to such a statement. Philosophic doubters do not give men, especially politicians, credit for much principles, and it is not to be denied that there is too much in public life that warrants this scepticism. Let it be given to us who are of the uninitiated to indulge the thought—if illusion it be, it is at least a pleasant one—that there are some high-minded men who neither for the sake of power, nor of passion, nor of revenge, will be untrue to their own best selves, and that among these Mr. Gladstone stands conspicuous and pre-eminent. Complaint has been made of the language applied to him. Of course it would not be applied to him by those who disapprove his conduct during the last two years. But they are but poor judges as to the estimate which his supporters have formed of the policy and of the man.

Let us endeavour to put it before them—not at all to convince them that Home Rule is right, for such an attempt would in all probability be wasted. All that we propose to do is to show that, accepting our view of Home Rule, there is nothing extravagant in our high estimate of Mr. Gladstone. We may be met at the outset by the suggestion that we are Home Rulers because we are followers of Mr. Gladstone. If it were true it would not be a grievous reproach, nor one that would discredit our advocacy of this concession of Ireland as an application in national affairs of the golden law of love. For Nonconformist ministers are not expected to originate great political changes. Besides, even if we had been con-

vinced of Ireland's right to such a measure of local government it is not to be supposed that we should take any action in relation to it until Ireland herself made the demand. We do not profess to be such enthusiasts for Home Rule as to undertake a crusade for it on our own account. Some of us are not enthusiasts even now. We accept it as a stern necessity, or regard it as an experiment which has been made inevitable by the misgovernment of the past, but we do not welcome it as desirable *per se*. We are not insensible to the difficulties which must surmount any change, and if it had been possible to satisfy the legitimate wishes of the Irish people without a separate Parliament we could have been quite content without it. It is pre-eminently an Irish question; and while numbers had long ago arrived at theoretic conclusions in favour of Home Rule, it was not till Ireland had put forth her claim, and Mr. Gladstone's action had brought it within the range of practical politics, that the time for action on our part came. His proposals did not in all respects commend themselves to our judgment, but the principle on which they were based appeared to us righteous, and we took our position accordingly. Our case was that of numbers of Liberals besides. We could not dispute the righteousness of the main principle, but we doubted as to some of the details. Whether we were wise or otherwise, at all events we acted independently. Had our views been carried out, there would have been an earnest endeavour to unite the party of progress on some plan, and it was slowly and reluctantly that we gave up the hope of such a settlement.

In the judgment of some, among whom Mr. John Bright is conspicuous, we should have done well not to interfere at all. Why not? We have a stake in the Empire, are as desirous of its unity and prosperity as the greatest magnate of the Unionist party, and are quite as likely to form an intelligent judgment as landlords who can hardly shake themselves wholly free from the influence of territorial interest or class feeling. If it could be said that our religious convictions prejudiced our views, and that being Protestants of the Protestants we could not be trusted to

handle Roman Catholic claims fairly, we should admit the strength of the objection. But the opposite is the case. It is a remarkable fact that thousands of the Nonconformist ministers of England—men whose Protestantism is most intense and earnest—have avowed their sympathy with the Roman Catholics of Ireland. The anger which a demonstration so remarkable has excited is not at all surprising. It is an inconvenient fact which cannot be ignored, and therefore those who take part in it must be brushed aside as fanatics or as worshippers of Mr. Gladstone. We are bound to add that the insinuation of insincerity has come from one quarter only, and that the quarter where it was least excusable. The wisdom of our action will be tested by events. Our right, or rather our obligation, to contribute what we can to the formation of a sound opinion on a great national question it is not necessary to vindicate. Experience has taught us that with the great majority of our judges the one testing point is our agreement with them. It was our fortune or misfortune to encounter a gentleman and who was among our censors, and indeed a censor of all Christians who took part in politics. His own mind was saturated with Tory prejudices, and his remarks showed him under the power of the ideas which *The Times* employs its influence to propagate. Yet, having denounced Mr. Parnell to his heart's content, insisted that Mr. Gladstone was not the leader of the Liberal party, and in various other ways shown his strong political bias, he had the assurance when he was cornered in an argument to say that he could not talk with Christians who dabbled in politics. If we had no reason for political action except the obligation to make a practical protest against cant of this kind, that would itself be sufficient. To men who must always be outside the circle of active politics, who have no ambition to satisfy and no personal ends to seek, and who have a thousand and one things to engage their attention and more deeply effect them, political service must ever be more or less of a weariness. There are great crises the excitement of which may overcome this feeling for a time, but they pass by, and are often succeeded

by times of bitter disappointment, following not upon defeat, which serves to rouse energy and determination, but rather upon victory which does not yield the expected fruits, and whose value may be lost by petty personal intrigue.

In short, politics do not form an attractive pursuit to men whose one aim is the triumph of great principles. There may be interest in the discussion, a certain amount of pleasure in the stir of the conflict, certainly pleasure in the advance of great reforms, the triumph of liberty, the assertion of the great law of righteousness. But these latter come but seldom. More frequently we have the subordination of great ends to small considerations of party or persons,—the delays which make the heart sick. It is hard to see how under such conditions anything but a stern sense of duty could induce a Christian man to enter on the thorny path of politics. If the time should ever come in this country when, as we are told is now the case in France, the only point at issue is who shall be the “salaried defenders” of British interests, there will not only be no reason why Nonconformists should take any prominent part in the conflict, but, on the contrary, both judgment and inclination would lead them to hold themselves aloof from so ignoble a strife. Happily we have not yet reached the nadir of party government. Lord Wolseley notwithstanding, there are honest patriots on both sides; and amid a good deal that is often very bewildering in the incidents of political warfare, there is still a struggle for principles in which we ought to have a living interest. We shall at all risks of misrepresentation endeavour to make the force of religious motive felt in political life. Matthew Arnold says the union of religion and politics is a fractious measure. But this depends upon the proportions in which they are mixed. If these be right, then religion ought to sweeten politics while political activity may save religion from a cloistered sanctimoniousness which repels the sympathies of men and neutralizes the power it should wield for the good of the world.

But now to turn to our admiration of Mr. Gladstone

and our present attitude towards Ireland. Unionists who attribute to him designs for the "disintegration" (we believe that is the correct word) of the Empire, and have accepted the estimate of him which *The Times* endeavours from day to day to impress upon the minds of its readers, will find it hard to listen to any reason on the subject. Those who do not see for themselves the absurdity of the suggestion that a statesman whose reputation is bound up with the honour and glory of his country has deliberately lent himself to a scheme which would inflict on her grave if not fatal injury, will not be convinced by any argument of ours. It would, however, be interesting to trace the process of reasoning by which they have reached so extraordinary a conclusion, and especially to learn by what motive they suppose Mr. Gladstone to be influenced in a proceeding which has not secured, and never promised to secure, for him even transient popularity and success. If it be said that he did not foresee the consequences of his own action, and by his action has given proof of the failure of the great power which marked him in earlier days, that indeed relieves him from the grave charges which have been so freely brought against him, but only by an excuse to which no one who knows anything of public affairs would listen except under the influence of party bitterness. There seems to be nothing too monstrous for his political enemies to insinuate against him because they have found nothing which their partisans are not prepared to accept with all greediness. The feeling is that Mr. Gladstone's influence must be crushed, and they are absolutely unscrupulous in the devices to which they resort for this purpose. The leaders of *The Times* for the last two years would furnish an anthology of sheer abuse—abuse that has not even the poor merit of wit and cleverness, but is nothing more than vulgar insolence and wild denunciation. The success which has been achieved speaks very badly for human nature. It is true that neither Mr. Gladstone's unrivalled abilities, nor his unblemished character, nor his venerable years, nor his magnanimity towards his opponents, should induce men to approve a policy which they hold to be mischievous. But

opposition to a policy ought not to blind fair critics to the merits of its author. We do not complain of men whose knowledge of Irish affairs is of the most meagre character, but who go about shaking their heads in a most solemn fashion and protesting that, after following Mr. Gladstone all their lives, they can trust him no longer, and that, in their belief, he has lost his great powers. The air of superior wisdom they assume is a trifle ridiculous, especially remembering on whom and by whom this judgment is pronounced. But this need trouble no one. It is different when respect for talent and character and years is utterly forgotten, every sentiment of chivalry cast aside, and not only our own people but the whole world invited to see and gloat over the humiliation of England's greatest statesman—a statesman so great, indeed, that even his critics shrink from the contemplation of the time when his noble form will be seen no more in the council chamber of the nation.

We do not claim on behalf of Mr. Gladstone any freedom from human infirmity. Genius of every kind is apt to betray a waywardness and wilfulness of its own. The very clearness of its own insight and the rapidity of its intellectual movements may make it impatient with men of slower or duller nature. It may be so with Mr. Gladstone. Whatever be his defects, there have never been wanting those eager to point them, and magnify them. Indeed, no higher tribute could well be paid to him than the way in which even mistakes, which would never be remembered in the case of ordinary statesmen, are exaggerated and quoted against him as though they were grave moral offences. This may doubtless be partly due to the evil habits of political controversy, but there is a personal animus in the attacks on Mr. Gladstone, which is not found in the case of any other statesman. For some reason or other, more is expected of him than of his rivals or associates, and he is judged by a standard which is never applied to them. A single case may illustrate this. Suppose the King-Harman incident had occurred in his administration, what a storm of abuse would have gathered around his devoted head. It has injured even the present Government, but had Mr.



Gladstone been at the head of a ministry which broke its own distinct pledge, he would have been held up to public scorn as one who had lost his character for ever. All this is really an indirect testimony to the impression he has produced. So much is expected from him that, venial errors are exaggerated into grave offences.

With the man who believes that Mr. Gladstone has spent his life in the pursuit of power, or the still more vulgar pursuit of office, it is useless to argue, for such a view indicates either ignorance of the facts or want of candour in judging of their significance. There was nothing to prevent Mr. Gladstone from becoming at an early period the leader of the Tory party, who hailed him, on his first appearance in public life, as their young Ascanius. If he turned aside from the easy path to distinction which lay open to him, it was in obedience to the dictates of a conscience which, according to a story which has often been told to his discredit but is really to his honour, made him so restive under the trammels of the old Toryism in which he was trained, that his father thus early expressed his doubts in relation to him. Those who suggest with more or less distinctness that he has been influenced by ambition, must surely forget how he sacrificed office at an early and critical period of his life from an honourable scruple, and how afterwards he was content to stand in the forefront of Free Trade and lose his seat for a loyalty to principle which to some appeared an excess of chivalry. The very hesitation and uncertainty which he showed in common with the other Peelites after the death of their chief, were very annoying to ardent party politicians on both sides, but, had he been inspired only or chiefly by ambition, they would have ended long before they did. In short, even Mr. Jennings, who certainly has not been sparing or scrupulous in his criticisms, has failed—and where he has failed none is likely to succeed—to show that he ever compromised a principle for the sake of place or power.

The last charge which can be substantiated against him in connection with his Irish policy is that of personal ambition. The facts of recent history are so easily for-



gotten, or, what is worse, the coloured version of political strife, given by heated partisans or unscrupulous journals which take their cue from Mr. Balfour and reproduce the one-sided views of Dublin Castle, so easily becomes current and is accepted instead of the truth, that it is necessary to go back carefully to review the whole case if we are to form an impartial judgment. There are two statements which are commonly made on the subject, and they have been so frequently reiterated and with so much confidence, that it is not easy even to modify the impression which prevails in relation to them. They are that Mr. Gladstone first called on the Liberals of England and Scotland to give him a majority in order that terms might be dictated to the Irish Nationalists ; and that having failed in this, he, without consulting his own colleagues, immediately made a humiliating and discreditable surrender to Mr. Parnell. There is so much plausibility about this representation, that it is not surprising that it should have been accepted in the heat of the controversy as correct. In reality it is so distorted as to convey an entirely erroneous impression. Mr. Gladstone's speech at the opening of the Midlothian campaign of 1885 greatly surprised us, and we expressed to some friends at the time our disappointment. The view we took of it then is precisely that which we take now. At the time we regarded it as an indication that Mr. Gladstone was so impressed with the gravity of the Irish problem, that he was prepared to postpone all other reforms for the sake of settling it ; and though we had long been convinced that the Irish demand must be fairly met, we were not so amiably disposed to the party which was playing the Tory game all over England, as to regard with satisfaction the announcement that all the questions in which we were interested must stand aside in order that it might be satisfied. But Mr. Gladstone had rightly interpreted the signs of the times. The majority was not obtained, and the Parnellites and the Tories constituting one half the new House, he was baffled in his attempt to secure such a following as would enable the Liberal party to carry a measure by their own

strength. What was his next step? To appeal to Lord Salisbury offering him his support if he would undertake the task. The problem had to be dealt with, for unless Parliamentary government be a farce, eighty-six members could not be treated with indifference, and if the union between the two countries was anything more than a name, so strong a preponderance of Irish opinion must command attention. The Liberals had a large majority over the Tories, but it was clear that they could not deal with the question alone. In short it was manifest that the House being divided into three sections, there must be a co-operation of two of them in order to any legislation. The appeal was first made to Lord Salisbury, and it was only on his refusal that he resolved on independent action. This incident is conveniently ignored by those who would fain convict Mr. Gladstone of reckless ambition. To-day, with the events of the last two years behind us, it may seem that the communication with Lord Salisbury, with Mr. Balfour as an intermediary, was little more than a mockery. But at the end of 1885 the situation was very different. The relations between the Tories and the Irish party, which had been more or less continuous through the whole of the Parliament of 1880, which had brought about the defeat of the Gladstone Government, and of which Mr. Parnell's manifesto on the eve of the General Election was the latest development, were, to say the least, of such a nature as to suggest that Lord Salisbury might be inclined to attempt a settlement. There was nothing absurd or extravagant in the suggestion that the Prime Minister who had appointed Lord Carnarvon to the Lord Lieutenancy of Ireland, whose subordinates had assailed the administration of Lord Spencer in the Maamtrasna debate, and whose own Newport speech was pitched in so friendly a key, might grant some measure of Home Rule. What is more, had Lord Salisbury been a great statesman, and had made the attempt, he would have rendered a great service to his country. We have no right to blame him because he was not equal to the opportunity. His associations, his prejudices, his general ideas of policy, all indisposed him to undertake

the task. Under such conditions he would certainly have acted more wisely had he never played with the subject or allowed his colleagues to play with it. The strong anti-Irish sentiment which led him to compare the obnoxious people to the Hottentots could not have been a sudden feeling, but one that must have been deeply rooted, and it would have been better for his own reputation had he yielded to it in the first instance. It seems impossible now that he should play the part of a great pacificator. The "flouts and gibes and jeers" of later times are more after the nature of the man, but in 1885 he seemed to contemplate a different policy, and Mr. Gladstone acted the part of a true patriot in promising him his support in the solution of a problem for the wise settlement of which all the resources of English statesmanship are required.

Failing in that, he addressed himself to the task alone. It does not need very much consideration for any candid man to see that the demand made upon his resolution, his courage, his magnanimity, was very great. The Irish Nationalists had no claim on his services, and there was certainly nothing in them which was likely to secure his sympathy. They had baffled the hopes with which his previous Ministry had opened, and, in fact, had robbed the Liberal party of the fruits of their great victory of 1880. They had abused, lampooned, reviled him with a pertinacity and bitterness surpassing even that which has provoked Mr. Bright into the passionate antagonism which he has displayed. And now he had to enter into association with them at the risk of alienating his own colleagues and shattering his party, and with the certainty of having to enter on a struggle the tremendous difficulties of which were sufficient to appal a veteran of seventy-five years. It may be said that he did not foresee the strength of the opposition he would have to encounter, and anticipated a rapid success. Even so there is no obvious reason why he should have employed his potent influence on behalf of men who had been his most truculent assailants. Whether he would have acted more wisely had he left the Tory Government of the time to make its own experiments is a question

which it is not possible now to determine. But if he erred in not adopting a waiting policy, it was a mistake in judgment, not in motive. It would be absurd to contend that he made no mistakes, and such a contention certainly is not necessary to our point, which is that, whether mistaken or not, his action was that of a high-minded patriot, who was content to sacrifice himself for the sake of a great national good. For he must have lost all his accustomed insight if he supposed that he would at once have disarmed the prejudice of the English people and overcome the hostility of the classes interested in the maintenance of the present state of things. Is it conceivable that he had forgotten to estimate the forces which were sure to be arrayed against him—the religious, the territorial, the national feeling he would have to encounter, the alarm of timid Conservatism, the arrogance of Imperialism, the bigotry of militant Orangeism, the hesitation of honest minds startled by the novelty and audacity of his proposals? Possibly these have developed more strength than he anticipated, but it is utterly incredible that a man of his sagacity did not foresee that the opposition would be bitter and intense. What it has actually been may be gathered from the extraordinary proceedings of the Duke of Westminster. "Boycotting" in high circles is different from "boycotting" in Ireland, but the sale of Mr. Gladstone's portrait and the cancelling of the invitations to Mr. Spencer and Mr. Grenfell show that the feeling which is so properly condemned in Irish peasants is at work also in English dukes. *Ex uno disce omnes*. The Duke of Westminster enables us to understand the feeling of Society towards Mr. Gladstone, and so to measure part of the sacrifice he has made in his devotion to what he believes to be a righteous cause. Surely even those who think that devotion misplaced, may still honour the man who thus sacrifices himself at the shrine of duty and of right. This, at least, is our view, and we had rather have it, even if it be an illusion, than partake of the wretched cynicism which will invent selfish motives rather than credit a great statesman with high and honourable principles. England herself is impoverished when the name

of her noblest son is dishonoured under the influence of petty faction.

In Mr. Bright's latest deliverance we are told that the "out and out attachment of some members of our Society to Mr. Gladstone is the result of emotion and not of reasoning or knowledge." Why the Unionist journals should give prominence to these arrogant and petulant utterances of one whom we delighted to honour, but who in his old age is doing his utmost to make us forget the noble services of earlier years, unless indeed underneath the present adulation there still lurks the hatred which used once to find such strong expression in *The Times*. Certain it is, these bitter words do not serve the cause of the Union, and they do injure Mr. Bright. He is in a small and decreasing minority in the party which once looked up to him as one of its most trusted chiefs; he is in a minority even in the Society which has been proud of him as one of its most distinguished members; he has separated himself from the friend of many years, and all he can say is the old old ditty, that those who have not done the same are fools or knaves. We, of course, are included in the same condemnation, and we welcome the reproach. We are not ashamed of our emotion. We believe that it is justified both by "reasoning and knowledge," and it is for those who think otherwise to meet us with argument, not with sneers at "emotion" or enthusiasm. That those who glory in Carlyle as their master and endorse his teachings even to his eulogy on Cromwell's Irish policy should take this line does not surprise us. We are not of their school, and have no drawings towards it. But neither is Mr. Bright, and it does surprise us that he should catch a tone so unlike his best self—so unlike, for example, the John Bright whom we remember glorifying the American abolitionists in a speech whose most thrilling passage was inspired by the catalogue of the heroes of faith in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews. His eulogists of to-day would have addressed to him then the selfsame kind of taunt which he flings at Mr. Gladstone's friends now. There must be differences of opinion on this Irish question; there

are differences on the Nationalist tactics even among those who support the Nationalist demands. Why should these prevent us from doing justice to high and noble qualities of which alas! there is no plethora in the political world?

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#### DENOMINATIONAL NOTES.

If our May meetings had no features of very special interest they were characterized by a great deal of true earnestness. The address of the Chairman of the Congregational Union had been awaited with a more than ordinary amount of anticipation. Dr. Bruce has been regarded as a representative of the more conservative spirit in theology, and it was supposed that some indications of this would be given in his Address. It came, therefore, as a surprise upon many because of its liberal and generous spirit. The manner in which it was received was sufficient to prove, if indeed proof were needed, of the thoroughly Evangelical spirit of the Union. The Assembly welcomed the opportunity of thus repudiating the charges which have been so recklessly brought against it. Dr. Bruce clearly defined his own position; but he showed no desire to judge those who hold fast by the doctrines of the cross because there are points on which they differ from him. As he endorsed, and called upon the Assembly to endorse, our own definition of the Congregational standpoint, we, of course, must be satisfied. We only wish that the demands of orthodoxy could be reduced to a test which though very simple is comprehensive also. We, at least, shall never fail to contend for liberty in Christ, and as strenuously to resist any attempt to dishonour the Lord by denying the reality of His Godhead, the sufficiency of His Atonement, or the grace of the indwelling Spirit. Some of Dr. Bruce's passages were extremely effective—one of the most telling being that in which he held up to deserved scorn the preaching which is so much occupied with speculations or

doubts that it forgets to set forth the truth as it is in Jesus. Of course there were statements in the Address which we might have wished to qualify, and here and there illustrations which did not commend themselves to our taste. But, taken as a whole, the Address was very powerful, and certainly raised the reputation of the Chairman.

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Australia necessarily had a prominent place in the proceedings of the Union, since the Union had to welcome Dr. Dale and Mr. Albert Spicer on their return, and to commend Dr. Hannay and Mr. Henry Lee on their mission to the churches of our kinsmen beyond the sea. We are not of those who dream dreams and see visions of Imperial Federation, whether in Church or State, and seeing the independent temper of Englishmen everywhere we have very grave doubts as to the wisdom of any efforts in the direction of more compact organization. But we attach great value to the cultivation of more close and intimate relations between our own churches and those of these enterprising and spirited colonies. The reports of the Deputation clearly show that we have much to teach one another, and that the interchange of visits may be mutually helpful provided that there be on both sides a recognition of the great diversity in the surroundings, and consequently that plans and methods which are useful enough for the one may be quite unsuitable for the other. The Union gave Dr. Dale the reception which he so well deserves, and it showed also its appreciation of the great service which Mr. Albert Spicer has already rendered, and the still greater work for which he has prepared himself. It is not easy to put too high a value upon the labours of a young man of business and active politician who devotes his time and money without stint to the promotion of our great Christian enterprises. Mr. Spicer's simple unadorned speeches at the Union, the London Missionary Society, and the Colonial Missionary Society, won golden opinions by the high tone in which they were pitched, and the practical wisdom by which they were characterized. We have no



fear that Mr. Spicer will ever be so carried away by a pseudo-catholicity as to forget his Nonconformist principles. He is a convinced and earnest Congregationalist, who has no faith in compromise, and still less in the suppression, of the principles to which he is conscientiously attached. One of our hopes for the Congregationalism of the future is in the development of this spirit among our young laymen. There is a little group in London among whom Mr. Albert Spicer is prominent, who are of this robust type, and there are many in the country (Mr. Edward Crossley and Mr. Ford Goddard being conspicuous at the Leeds meetings) who give abundant proof of loyalty and zeal, and in whom is a rich promise of future service.

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Mr. Berry's missionary sermon to the young people was another omen for good. The call to Plymouth Church has drawn the attention of his own countrymen to the able young minister of Wolverhampton, and his sermon at the City Temple was, to say the least, sufficient to show that our American brethren had not been misled in their idea of his power. Curiosity was probably one of the influences in attracting the crowd which thronged the spacious chapel, but all who were present must have felt the force of Mr. Berry's discourse. It was fresh in thought, Evangelical in spirit, vigorous in reasoning, and felicitous in style—the kind of sermon which gives a right to a place in the front rank of preachers.

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We heard an observation recently to the effect that the favourite hymn at our missionary meetings is "Forward be our watchword," but that there is little indication in the action of the Board of Directors that this motto is ever remembered in the interval between the anniversaries. The observation was too sweeping, but there is in it a germ of truth, which might with advantage be remembered. We can testify from personal knowledge that there are among the directors, men full of earnestness and *verve*, who are ready to listen



to any wise suggestions, and to give them due weight, who are themselves in touch with the men of progress in the churches, and desirous that the Society should be so also. But there are conservative influences also which doubtless have their own value, but which must be held in check if the Society is to rise to its opportunities. The question of the hour is how to make the churches more familiar with the work that is being done, and with the demands for enlarged effort which are being made on every side. There is a good deal of enterprise so far as the foreign work is concerned, but it is not sufficiently sustained by sufficient inventiveness and daring at home. The churches are not alive to their responsibilities. The financial report is anything but satisfactory. It may be possible to account for the want of expansive power in the income, but the explanation does not get rid of the adverse balance nor make provision for the ever-increasing wants of the world. The constituents of the societies have to face a great problem, the terms of which have not yet been set fairly before them. How it can best be done is a matter for the most grave deliberation. We do not see why a morning should not sometimes be secured at the Union meetings for frank and thorough conference on missionary subjects. The election of Mr. Griffiths John to the chair is a sufficient indication of the feeling that the Union entertains. Why not utilize it for the purpose of securing such a consideration of the details of missionary work as is unknown at present. Is it too revolutionary to hint that the time is come for a reform in the annual missionary meeting? The present plan might be suitable enough for the days when the Society had almost exclusive possession of the week, but now when we have every morning and almost every evening occupied, it is not to be expected that large audiences will be gathered for a morning meeting of four hours. Our remedy would be—shorten the length of the meeting; let the report be put in the hands of every person on entering and taken as read; put the speakers under rigid law, and let them be selected so as to get a view of different parts of the mission field; above all, impress on all missionary speakers that

what the audience wants to hear from them is the story of their personal experiences, and not general views of the country or the people among whom they have laboured. Then we venture to think that a good evening meeting might be held in one of the suburbs. London has grown so vast that no central meeting can suffice to keep the Churches generally informed and interested in missionary work.

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Dr. Hannay and Mr. Lee will well represent the spirit and feeling of English Congregationalism in Australia, and their visit, following thus closely upon that of Dr. Dale and Mr. Albert Spicer, will strengthen the happy impression which these gentlemen produced. But the Union will greatly miss its secretary, however it may rejoice in thought of the benefit which the Churches of the other hemisphere may derive from his inspiring influence, and indulge the hope that the change of scene and work may contribute to the invigoration of his health. Never did any association receive more loyal or more able service than that which Dr. Hannay gives the Congregational Union. He is in the happy position of being the target for all kinds of criticism, but the very criticism which is inevitable under such conditions is only a tribute to his worth. Some think that their special qualities for service are not appreciated, and that they are not invited to the platform of the Union as often as, in their own impartial judgment of their fitness, they might expect. Others complain that sufficient time is not given for the discussion of subjects in which they are specially interested. Lately a few have expressed dissatisfaction at the introduction of political subjects, and, if they were omitted, it is quite certain that a much stronger and more decided remonstrance would be heard. While these are the only causes of discontent, it must be abundantly manifest that there is no real disaffection because there is no ground for it. They are simply the utterances which we hear in relation to all institutions from those who have a chronic difference with their conductors as to their own merits, or who are possessed with a belief that they could manage

better than those who are at present in authority. Of course the Secretary bears all the blame, and yet, after all, the determination of any of the points named is not in his hands. What he has to do is to gather up the opinions of the Union generally, and, by means of them, to guide the deliberations of the Committee, and this Dr. Hannay does most successfully. His ability in the conduct of business and his singular power of debate are known to all. It is only his friends and familiars who can rightly appreciate that noble simplicity of character, that perfect transparency in word and action, that unbending courage, and last, but not least, that tenderness of nature which endear him to all who have the happiness of his intimate fellowship. A happy voyage to him and his fellow-traveller, with a return as full of honour as that of their predecessors !

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The new departure which the Union is to take by the publication of its own books may yet prove to be of great importance to the interests of the denomination. Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton have hitherto been the publishers of its literature, of which the Hymn-book was the most important item, and the relations between them and the Union have always been of the most satisfactory character. But there has long been a desire on the part of many that the Union should be its own publisher, and, after considerable deliberation, it has been resolved to take this step. In our advertising pages will be found an announcement of the contemplated arrangements. It remains to be seen whether this will prove to be the beginning of a Congregational Book Room. Of one thing we are certain. There is no point to which we need to give more earnest thought and more generous support than our own literature. Congregationalism has nothing to expect from what is called undenominational literature. The Anglican Church is in possession and has the full benefit of that fact in all the references to religion and religious life which appear in books and periodicals of this type. To judge from many of them, Dissent might have no existence in the country. It remains

for us to help ourselves. The Union need not undertake to purchase books, but it may afford facilities to authors in various ways, and if this be done, not only our own literature, but Christian literature in general, may be the gainer. The success of the Hymnal is an encouragement for good hope as to the issue of this new enterprise.



### GEMS OF AMERICAN SACRED POETRY.\*

#### GRADATION.

HEAVEN is not reached at a single bound,  
But we build the ladder by which we rise  
From the lowly earth to the vaulted skies,  
And we mount to its summit round by round.

I count this thing to be grandly true;  
That a noble deed is a step toward God,  
Lifting the soul from the common clod  
To a purer air and a broader view.

We rise by the things that are under feet,  
By what we have mastered of good and gain,  
By the pride deposed and the passion slain,  
And the vanquished ills that we hourly meet.

We hope, we aspire, we resolve, we trust,  
When the morning calls us to life and light,  
But our hearts grow weary and, ere the night,  
Our lives are trailing the sordid dust.

We hope, we resolve, we aspire, we pray,  
And we think that we mount the air on wings,  
Beyond the recall of sensual things,  
While our feet still cling to the heavy clay.

Wings for the angels, but feet for men,  
We may borrow the wings to find the way,  
We may hope and resolve and aspire and pray,  
But our feet must rise or we fall again.

\* Under this heading we propose to give brief pieces from American poets, selected from books little known in this country.

Only in dreams is a ladder known,  
From the weary earth to the sapphire walls,  
But the dreams depart and the vision falls,  
And the sleeper awakes on his pillar of stone.

Heaven is not reached at a single bound,  
But we build the ladder by which we rise  
From the lowly earth to the vaulted skies,  
And we mount to its summit round by round.

JOSIAH GILBERT HOLLAND.

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THE PILGRIM FOREFATHERS.

'NEATH hoary moss on crumbling stones  
Their names are fading day by day;  
The fashions of their lives and speech  
From sight and sound have passed away.

The shores they found so bleak, so bare,  
Shine now with riches gay and proud;  
And we light-hearted, dance on ground  
Where they in anguish wept and bowed.

Unto the faith they bought so dear  
We pay each day less reverent heed;  
And boast, perhaps, that we outgrow  
The narrowness which marked their creed.

A shallow boast of thankless hearts,  
In evil generation born;  
By side of those old Pilgrim men  
The ages shall hold us in scorn.

Find me the men on earth who care  
Enough for faith or creed to-day  
To seek a barren wilderness  
For simple liberty to pray;

Men who for simple sake of God  
All titles, riches would refuse,  
And in their stead disgrace and shame,  
And bitter poverty would choose.

We find them not. Alas! the age,  
 In all its light, hath blinder grown;  
 In all its plenty, starves because  
 It seeks to live by bread alone.

We owe them all we have of good:  
 Our sunny skies, our fertile fields;  
 Our freedom, which to all oppressed  
 A continent of refuge yields.

And what we have of ill, of shame,  
 Our broken word, our greed for gold,  
 Our reckless schemes and treacheries,  
 In which men's souls are bought and sold,—

All these have come because we left  
 The paths that these Forefathers trod;  
 The simple, single-hearted ways  
 In which they feared and worshipped God.

Despise their narrow creed who will!  
 Pity their poverty who dare!  
 Their lives knew joys, their lives wore crowns,  
 We do not know, we cannot wear.

And if so be that it is saved,  
 Our poor Republic, stained and bruised,  
 'Twill be because we lay again  
 Their corner stones which we refused.

MRS. HELEN HUNT JACKSON.

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#### OUR PATTERN.

A WEAVER sat one day at his loom,  
 Among the colours bright,  
 With the pattern for his copying  
 Hung fair and plain in sight.

But the weaver's thoughts were wandering  
 Away on a distant track,  
 As he threw the shuttle in his hand  
 Wearily forward and back.

And he turned his dim eyes to the ground,  
 And tears fell on the woof,  
 For his thoughts, alas! were not with his home,  
 Nor the wife beneath its roof;

When her voice recalled him suddenly  
 To himself, as she sadly said :  
 " Ah, woe is me ! for your work is spoiled,  
 And what will we do for bread ? "

And then the weaver looked, and saw  
 His work must be undone ;  
 For the threads were wrong, and the colours dimmed,  
 Where the bitter tears had run.

" Alack, alack ! " said the weaver,  
 " And this had all been right  
 If I had not looked at my work, but kept  
 The pattern in my sight ! "

Ah ! sad it was for the weaver,  
 And sad for his luckless wife ;  
 And sad will it be for us, if we say,  
 At the end of our task of life :

" The colours that we had to weave  
 Were bright in our early years ;  
 But we wove the tissue wrong, and stained  
 The woof with bitter tears.

We weave a web of doubt and fear,—  
 Not faith, and hope, and love,—  
 Because we looked at our work, and not  
 At our pattern up above ! "

PHEBE CARY.

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#### EDITORIAL NOTES.

WE are not political optimists disposed to exaggerate every favourable sign, and raise premature shouts of victory in the midst of an arduous struggle, but the result of the Southampton election and the remarkable manifesto which appeared in *The Birmingham Daily Post* on the day after Mr. Gladstone's spirited little address at Hawarden came certainly in happy time to confirm his idea that the Liberal party never stood on higher, broader, and surer ground than at present. We are far from saying that the Tory game is played out, but the signs of weariness on the part of Unionists within the House and still more of the constituencies outside are unmistakable. The verdict pro-

nounced by Southampton is as surprising as it is decided, and the Unionist journals in endeavouring to minimize its significance only expose their own weakness. *The Times* has the coolness to ask its readers to believe that the conversion of a minority of more than 600 into a majority of 885 is due mainly to local considerations, and quotes in support of that view a letter from some Southampton correspondent who writes as though he had never seen an election before, and finds consolation in the fact that Mr. Evans has declared against separation. If that be a comfort to him, his heart may be at perfect ease, for there is not a supporter of Mr. Gladstone's in Parliament who would not say the same. A constant reader of *The Times* may perhaps be excused for believing that all Liberals are Separatists, seeing that the calumny is reiterated from day to day; but he is to blame for the weakness which reposes implicit faith in a journal whose weakness is to see and report events as it wishes them to be, not as they actually are. It would be more politic, however, as well as more true, to admit that the issue of the Southampton contest is a "heavy blow and great discouragement." Of course there was a good deal of local sentiment, but it is absurd to suggest that it had a determining influence. Strongly as Southampton feels on all questions relating to its own prosperity, there was no such balance in favour of Mr. Evans on them as to account for a change so extreme. For some reason or other the electors are dissatisfied with the present *regimé*, and they have said so with an emphasis which leaves no room for doubt.

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We do not at all suppose that Ireland has been the sole, or even the chief, object present to the minds of the voters when arriving at this decision. On the contrary, we believe that it has not, and to us this is one of the most satisfactory features of the whole. The Unionist contention in Parliament is that everything must give place to the paramount necessity for supporting a Government which is determined upon carrying out its patent mode of ruling



Ireland by imprisoning its patriot representatives. We have held from the first that such a mode of action is wrong in principle, and would ere long be found impossible in practice. The licensing clauses of the Local Government Bill have put on it a more severe strain than any to which it has hitherto been subjected, and the Southampton election shows that it cannot sustain the pressure. Whether these clauses or Home Rule excited most interest in the constituency we do not care to argue. At the outset the Tories insisted that it was on them the contest would be fought, believing that this view would be to their advantage. No doubt the Irish question was a chief factor in the decision, but it may fairly be said also that the vote of Southampton was a distinct pronouncement against Mr. Ritchie's iniquitous proposals. It was in vain that an attempt was made to cajole the electors into the belief that the sting had been taken out of them. They saw clearly that the only effective defence against them would be their rejection by Parliament, and that the surest way to secure that would be to return a Liberal. In short, the election is satisfactory as indicating a return to a more healthy state of political feeling. For the last two years Irish questions have dominated everything, until the Government seemed to believe that they might work their own will in English legislation, provided they could keep Mr. Gladstone out of office and put Ireland down. If Southampton has done anything to explode this Unionist delusion it may have marked a turning point in this controversy, and if so it will have done a greater service to Liberalism than is indicated in the addition of another recruit to its parliamentary force.

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The article in *The Birmingham Daily Post*, which may be regarded as a *communiqué*, is hardly less significant in its own way than the election. No one who has closely studied recent proceedings in Parliament can be astonished that Radical Unionists should be anxious for some change. The King-Harman episode is sufficient to disgust all reasonable men, and under normal parliamentary conditions

would have been fatal even to a strong Government. But the strength of the present Ministry is in its weakness. Had it been supported by a majority of its own it would hardly have ventured to presume so far on their loyalty; but as it can count upon the votes of a certain number of Liberals(?) who seem as though they would in the last resort acquiesce in anything rather than put the Ministry in a minority, it has grown so reckless as to goad into resistance those who were desirous rather to support it. The result is seen in the following suggestive statement from so loyal an adherent of Radical Unionism as the London correspondent of *The Birmingham Daily Post*:—"What is perfectly certain to all observant politicians is that *the present system of ruling Ireland by resident magistrates cannot last much longer*, and that is a fact which both Home Rulers and Unionists are bound to recognize." There is no need to ask Home Rulers to recognize this. Against this monstrous system of government by resident magistrates we have constantly protested, and constantly been charged with being patrons of lawlessness, breakers of the Decalogue, and we know not what beside, because of our protests. To those who have taken the trouble to go through *The Times* reports of Irish trials, the development of the despotic and lawless temper in the action of some of these "R.M.'s" has been portentous; but remonstrance was always met by the cry that we were defending boycotting or some other wickedness. Never was charge more unsustained. We are as anxious to see actual crime punished as the most intense coercionist, but we hold that crime is encouraged, not repressed, when the distinction which separates it from mere political offence is broken down. There are two sides to the miserable attempt to put down patriots, even though their zeal may need some check, by confounding them with felons. It may degrade the patriots, but it may—and this is probable—exalt the felons, a result which all wise men would deprecate. It is because we have expressed these views and condemned proceedings of the Resident Magistrates and their superiors, which were lawless in spirit if not actually contrary to the

letter of the law, that we have been denounced, just as the twelve hundred members of the Society of Friends are denounced by the "Septuagenarian Quaker" who writes to *The Times* (how conveniently these Nonconformists, or Quakers, or Liberals, turn up when they are needed) as enemies of law and order. Now this Unionist writer tells us that all sensible men see that the thing cannot last. Of course not. But he goes on further to tell us that there must be concessions to Ireland, the underlying suggestion being that the time is come for trying Mr. Chamberlain's plan, but "a reconstruction of the Ministry is a preliminary condition to any real work being done." Happily we are again in agreement with this writer. Change there must be, and it only remains to be seen whether there is such a disposition to deal in a thorough yet conciliatory spirit with the whole Irish question as would bring about the only kind of change that would be effective. After so many disappointments we cannot be sanguine; but we wait the development of events. Every day makes it clearer that the Liberal party will add to its other achievements by the settlement of the Irish difficulty. Indeed, the difference between the Birmingham plan and Home Rule is not so great as to forbid the possibility of arrangement. But in order to this, the whole question must be taken out of the low-lying regions of intrigue and personal antagonism, and lifted up to that higher level of principle on which our great chief has always treated it.

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We have not space at present to discuss the licensing clauses of the Local Government Bill at length. Our great anxiety, however, is that our temperance friends should not throw away their present great opportunity by extravagance. When they refuse to allow the creation of a legal right to compensation where clearly there is none at present, they are on the solid rock; but if they confound equitable consideration for men who are engaged in a business which is not only lawful, but from which the State itself derives a large revenue, and who would be ruined by

being compelled to abandon without legal compensation, we venture to think they will make a great mistake. There is really no occasion for them to argue the question of equitable consideration at present. There is not the slightest probability of any large number of public-houses being closed, and those who are interested in keeping them open understand perfectly well that nothing would serve their purpose better than to alarm the tax-payers about the cost of closing them. That one fact should warn prohibitionists off such dangerous ground. The point at present before the country is whether a vested interest shall be created, and the more closely the discussion is confined to that the more certain will be the victory for the friends of Temperance.

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There is a strange contradiction between the invitations to celebrate the deliverance of England from the power of Rome and Spain by the defeat of the proud Armada of Philip, and the exhortations to gratitude for the interposition of the Pope to-day to suppress the Irish Nationalists and their doings. There is, to say the least, an appearance of inconsistency here, for if the emancipation of our own country from the yoke of the Papacy was so memorable an achievement that its Tercentenary is to be regarded as a grand national event, surely it cannot be a matter of satisfaction that the people of Ireland are to this day held under the same bondage. Still less can we be justified in helping to rivet on them the chains which we have shaken off our own neck. As if to make the contrast still more glaring, the Duke of Norfolk, a great Roman Catholic leader, who has been the intermediary between the Pope and the Government which is supported by all the Orangemen of Ireland, is also a member of some committee which has undertaken the celebration of this great Protestant victory. It is true that the Admiral of that day, Lord Howard of Effingham, was the ancestor of the Duke of Norfolk, but he must have been a Catholic of a very different type from his descendant, or he would hardly have undertaken to place himself in opposition to the will of the Pope. The Tercentenary is not

worth keeping except in recognition of the Divine mercy by which the cause of English Protestantism, with which were bound up all our liberty and our progress, was delivered from an attack which at one time seemed irresistible. But how can they celebrate it who are content to ask Rome to employ that same influence against Ireland which three hundred years ago it put forth for Spain against England, and who, forsooth, dare to quote the Pope as a teacher of morality? The questions on which he has pronounced we do not propose to discuss here, nor, in truth, can they be treated in the easy, comfortable fashion which some are pleased to adopt. We loathe boycotting very much more than numbers who clamour against it, but who have recourse to it themselves when an obnoxious Dissenter or Radical is to be suppressed in an English village. We hate it everywhere and under every form. Of the "Plan of Campaign" we have never spoken an approving word. But when we are asked to treat it as an act of robbery we demur. We have no more sympathy with lawlessness than our critics, and they know it. It is indeed one painful feature in this unhappy controversy about Ireland that charges are brought so recklessly and with such utter absence of justification. Men who have never expressed an opinion on behalf of the tactics of the National League are branded as parties to them simply because they hold that a nation should not be deprived of its rights for any faults on the part of their champions. We judge Home Rule on its merits, and we are denounced as though we were responsible for every act of Home Rulers. And now, to crown the whole, we are told that the Pope will teach us morality. Before instructing us it would be well for him to separate himself from all complicity with the acts of his infallible predecessors. Leo XIII. is the successor of the Pope who approved the crimes perpetrated by that distinguished defender of the faith, Philip II. of Spain. Till he has disavowed the policy which the Papacy has always pursued for the advancement of its own ends, he can have no title to admonish others as to those principles of the Decalogue which have been so shamelessly broken in the interests of

Rome. The most curious point in the whole is that those who thus appeal to the Pope claim to be Protestants *par excellence*.

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### THE PEOPLE'S BIBLE.\*

DR. PARKER is still working his way through the historical books of the Old Testament, and at each successive stage in his progress is giving fresh proofs of his remarkable power of drawing out of these ancient records lessons for the toil and conflict of to-day. There is no surer way of meeting the too prevalent tendency to depreciate the value of the Old Testament than to give such practical demonstration of the reality and power of histories which, though they belong to an age so remote, and narrate the experiences of lives passed under conditions so entirely different from ours, have about them that touch of nature which makes brothers of us all. This is what Dr. Parker endeavours to do everywhere, and in the execution of this self-imposed task he acquits himself with rare ability. No doubt some of his observations may be pronounced far-fetched, while others are regarded as too extreme, but surely it is not to be supposed that we agree in every opinion or approve of every illustration because we express our hearty admiration of a book which is marked by an originality and freshness, a clearness of apprehension and a vividness of presentation which not only interest the thoughtful reader, but stimulate his own intellectual and spiritual life. The two volumes before us cover the history of the Jewish people from the beginning of the antagonism between Saul and David down to the Babylonian captivity. It is a wide area to traverse, and in the journey all varieties of character are met with, and each of them makes his own contribution to our knowledge of human nature and of God's mode of dealing with it. In no other literature

\* *The People's Bible*. By JOSEPH PARKER, D.D. Vols. VII. and VIII. 1 Samuel xviii. to 1 Chronicles ix. (Hazell, Watson, & Viney.)

can be found such a history and such a biography. The skill of the expositor is shown in his capacity to bring out of the treasure-house things new and old, and especially so to use the old that there shall be on it the bloom of a perpetual youth. Too often the commentator on these books, though orthodox to the last point, has only left on us the impression that we were wandering in a valley of bones which, alas! were very dry. Dr. Parker makes these dry bones live, and in this there is not only a triumph of the expositor's art, but, what is of far higher importance, a demonstration of the power of the Book.

We select one or two extracts which may help to give our readers some idea of the character of the book. Dr. Parker's views of the "larger ministry of the Church" are well known. He believes that in its work there is a place for the wit as well as for the divine, and that the Church fails in not making use of this as of all other gifts.

We should make (he says, in speaking of the wit) a modern Elijah of him, and he should taunt the priests of evil on their own ground and across their own altars till they ran away for very shame. Such a man should have a function in the Church. We do not want his humour here, mayhap; let that be fully understood; but it is wanted somewhere in this heathen London.

Again—

Out of the ruins of Luther the monk, Christ will build Luther the Protestant reforming teacher. He will not make a less Luther. He will not say to him, "You must lay aside your commonness, your vulgarity of speech, your buffoonery; you must lay aside your music and your humour, and your love of all the movements of the times; and you must become a smaller man." He said, "I shall want all your humour, all your rude force, all your blunt expression"—for Luther would never have been the man he was in Europe but for that singular faculty—which is oftentimes known as vulgarity—the power of speaking expressively, the power of being graphic and vivid, the power of saying what the common people understand in their own language and with their own accent.

Here is a striking observation, suggested by David's atheistic thoughts in his hour of despair, but equally applicable to many of the incidents in sacred story, and in fact carried out by Dr. Parker in relation to them. The whole

passage on David's faltering in the hour when he seemed to have lost the favour both of lords and people is extremely suggestive, but the following sentences are really the key to a great many of the difficulties in interpretation :

Let it be clearly understood that the story, viewed as illustrative of providential care, is by no means so dark as it looks. Somewhere we shall find an explanatory word. In reading history, always seek for the moral key. In estimating personal life, never forget to search the heart. The mysteries of providence are sometimes only the shadows of our own misjudgments and immoralities.

As an example of Dr. Parker's power of direct and thrilling appeal we will take the following picture of Saul after the death of Samuel and his own departure from God :

Not only was Samuel dead, but the Lord Himself gave Saul no answer, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets. It is of no use for some men to pray. They have sinned away the day of grace. By iniquity upon iniquity they have built up between themselves and God a great wall. By the exceeding multitude of their sins they have exhausted the patience of God. We had better say this very plainly, lest we encourage false hopes, and undertake a case which admits of no defence. If a man put out his own eyes, shall we urge him to try to see, pity him because he is blind ? If a man willfully destroy his hearing, what boots it that we exhort him to listen ? Madness ! To some men I have this message to deliver : You have shut yourself out from God—you have deafened yourself against His counsel, and would none of His reproof—you have starved the good angel within you which sang the sweet song of your youthful hope—you have murdered your own soul ; toll the knell ; report the news in heaven : a man has slain the God that was in him, and now he awaits but the hour which shall see him thrown into the only darkness which can hide his shame. He is without God and without hope in the world ; there is now no summer in his life ; he is winter-bound and filled with desolation.

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#### TWELVE EMINENT STATESMEN.\*

The course of human affairs is not wholly shaped by the

\* *William the Conqueror.* By EDWARD A. FREEMAN, D.C.L. *Cardinal Wolsey.* By MANDELL CREIGHTON, M.A. *William the Third.* By H. D. TRAILL. (Macmillan & Co.)



influence of great men, perhaps is not affected so much by them as we are accustomed to believe, but assuredly so much of the interest of history gathers around them that there is considerable justification for the remark that the history of the world is the history of its great men. It cannot be doubted that the development of our national institutions has been largely affected by the spirit of the people, and yet how different would the course of our history have been had a few men who hold a distinguished place in our annals never lived ! We have before us three volumes of a series of biographies of twelve statesmen. They did not make England ; it is possible that England would have attained her greatness independent of them ; it is certain that there are others, some of them comparatively obscure, who have contributed much, possibly quite as much, if not more, to that real elevation of the people. Still they have left their mark deep on the history, especially the first and the last. Cardinal Wolsey was a far-seeing politician, even more than a great ecclesiastic, but the times were against the success of his policy, and circumstances hindered him from accomplishing what might have been possible under more favourable conditions. His was a policy with which we have little sympathy, and yet there were elements of nobility in a man who was so liberal in his thoughts, and so munificent in his givings, for the great work of education. Men like Wolsey would never have reformed the Church or emancipated the conscience of Europe, but he was a fine example of a certain type of statesmen who impress the world by the wide reach of their ideas as well as by their personal magnificence. Mr. Creighton has told his story with considerable power and fairness. He rightly appreciates the character of the great Cardinal and the drift of his policy. The book is extremely well done, and gives within a moderate compass a complete conspectus of a deeply interesting life.

This is the most marked feature of all these volumes. The subjects are well chosen, they are treated by thoroughly competent authors, and though the biographies are short, they are thorough. The two Williams are unquestionably

two of the most powerful rulers in the long catalogue of English sovereigns. If we were asked to select a writer who could do justice to William the Conqueror we should turn instinctively to Professor Freeman, who is *facile princeps* in this department of our literature and this period of our national story. It may be that at times he offends by that note of superiority which is so characteristic of an Oxford professor, but it is really to be excused in consideration of the validity of his right to adopt the tone of authority. The thoroughness of his knowledge is not more remarkable than his far-reaching vision. With eagle eye he sweeps the field of history, and in a solitary sentence suggests the philosophy of an entire history. How true, and, though apparently simple, how profound the wisdom of the observation with which this little volume opens: "The history of England, like the land and its people, has been specially insular, and yet no land has undergone deeper influences from without. No land has owed more than England to the personal action of men not of native birth." The two kings, whose biographies are before us, both illustrate this suggestive remark, which is further worked out in the following very striking passage,

That the history of England for the last eight hundred years has been what it has been has largely come of the personal character of a single man. That we are what we are to this day largely comes of the fact that there was a moment when our national destiny might be said to hang on the will of a single man, and that that man was William, surnamed, at different stages of his life and memory, the Bastard, the Conqueror, and the Great. With perfect fitness then does William the Norman, William the Norman Conqueror of England, take his place in a series of English statesmen. That so it should be is characteristic of English history. Our history has been largely wrought for us by men who have come in from without, sometimes as conquerors, sometimes as the opposite of conquerors; but in whatever character they came, they had to put on the character of Englishmen, and to make their work an English work. From whatever land they came, on whatever mission they came, as statesmen they were English. William, the greatest of his class, is still but a member of a class. Along with him we must reckon a crowd of kings, bishops, and high officials, in many ages of our history. Theodore of Tarsus and Cnut of Denmark, Lanfranc of Pavia and Anselm of Aosta, Randolph Flambard and Roger of Salis-

bury, Henry of Anjou and Simon of Montfort, are all written on a list of which William is but the foremost. The largest number come in William's own generation, and in the generations just before and after it. But the breed of England's adopted children and rulers never died out. The name of William the Deliverer stands, if not beside that of his namesake the Conqueror, yet surely alongside of the lawgiver from Anjou. And we count among the later worthies of England not a few men sprung from other lands, who did and are doing their work among us, and who, as statesmen at least, must count as English. As we look along the whole line, even among the conquering kings and their immediate instruments, their work never takes the shape of the rooting up of the earlier institutions of the land. Those institutions are modified, sometimes silently by the mere growth of events, sometimes formally and of set purpose. Old institutions get new names; new institutions are set up alongside of them. But the old ones are never swept away; they sometimes die out; they are never abolished. This comes largely of the absorbing and assimilating power of the island world. But it comes no less of personal character and personal circumstances, and pre-eminently of the personal character of the Norman Conqueror and of the circumstances in which he found himself.

What is true of William the Conqueror is in a great measure true of William the Deliverer. Mr. Traill does justice to the great Prince of Orange, and by his vivid sketches of the life of the period enables us to see how badly English liberty would have fared had it not found so gallant a champion. The subject is one which we shall have to treat more fully in telling the story of the Revolution, and we shall then have to point out some points of difference with Mr. Traill. All these books are of a high order, and the entire series ought to be both popular and useful.

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#### CURRENT LITERATURE.

*Among the Cannibals of New Guinea: Being the Story of the New Guinea Mission of the London Missionary Society.* By Rev. S. MACFARLANE, LL.D., F.R.G.S., London Missionary Society. (John Snow & Co.) We are glad to see that the London Missionary Society has decided to issue a series of missionary manuals giving an account of the different missions connected with the Society. Such a series cannot but prove exceedingly useful in promoting a missionary spirit in the

churches. The eye helps the heart, and people naturally take more interest in a thing if they know something about it. The more information people have about missions, the more likely are they to feel an intelligent interest in them. The object of the Society in issuing these manuals is to meet a want—which is not fully supplied by the occasional missionary meeting or even by the missionary magazine—of full and detailed information concerning the rise and progress of the various missions belonging to it. New Guinea has been wisely chosen as the subject of the first manual. In the history of modern missions there have been few more thrilling stories than that which is related in the volume before us. The story itself is one of great interest, and the intrinsic charms which belong to it are not a little enhanced by the lively and agreeable style in which it is told. The mission in New Guinea is one of the youngest branches of the Society's work. It was started in the year 1870, when Dr. Macfarlane, then stationed at Lifu, chartered a vessel in order to cruise along the coast of New Guinea. In the chapter entitled "How we got at Them," the author describes his first attempts to secure the goodwill of the natives. Being entirely ignorant of the language of the people, and therefore unable to hold any oral communication with them, he won their confidence by acts of kindness. "Acts of kindness," he says, "are a language that people can understand all the world over, and that was the only language we were able to use in our first touch with these cannibal tribes at different points of our mission. The first man upon whom we tried this language was the leading warrior of the island, who is now the senior deacon of the church there. Soon after we cast anchor on that memorable Saturday evening, he made his appearance on the bill, evidently to reconnoitre. We beckoned to him, and then jumped into our boat and met him on the beach. That meeting, like many other of our first meetings with the cannibals in New Guinea, was very different from the pictures in books and magazines of the missionary's first landing amongst savages. I have often been amused at the pictures of Moffat, Williams, &c., compared with my own experience. Instead of standing on the beach in a suit of broadcloth with Bible in hand, the pioneer missionary in New Guinea might be seen on the beach in very little and very light clothing, with an umbrella in one hand and a small bag in the other; containing (not Bibles and tracts but) beads, jew's harps, small looking-glasses, and matches: not pointing to heaven giving the impression that he is a rainmaker, but sitting on a stone with his shoe and stocking off, surrounded by an admiring crowd, who are examining his white foot, and rolling up his wet trousers (he having waded on shore from the boat) to see if he has a white leg, and then motioning for him to bare his breast, that they may see if that also is white. The opening and shutting of an umbrella for protection from the sun, the striking of a match, the ticking and movement of a watch—these things cause great surprise and delight, and loud exclamations. What we did when we met this savage on the

beach at Darnley, was to induce him to enter our boat and to accompany us to our vessel, which after a few friendly demonstrations we succeeded in doing, though he was evidently very much afraid. We talked to him on board in a manner most effectual. Not knowing the way to his heart through his ear, we took the familiar road through his stomach by giving him a good dinner, then made him a few small presents, and sent him away rejoicing, giving him to understand, by signs, that he was to return next morning at sunrise, and bring his friends with him."

The method of procedure was first of all to win the confidence of the natives, and then having secured a footing amongst them, to form a station and to leave two or more teachers in charge of it. These were, in the first instance, South Sea Islanders, who volunteered for the service. Their heroism and self-sacrificing zeal are touchingly illustrated in the following incident recorded of the first band of eight who were selected as pioneers for the New Guinea mission:

"How well I remember standing near the door of that grass hut on the morning of the fifth day, when the teacher's boxes and bundles had been landed, and all was ready for us to start for the point on the New Guinea coast where we intended, if possible, to form our next station! The teachers did not know that I was there; they were sitting on their goods, which were placed together in one corner of the hut, as emigrants do on the wharf in a strange land. As I approached, I heard one of the women crying most piteously; it was Gucheng's wife, who had been a girl in my wife's school. I stood for a few moments outside, unwilling to intrude, for such grief seemed to render the place sacred. 'Oh, my country! Why did we leave our happy home? Would that I were back at Lifu again! I told you I did not want to come to New Guinea! These people will kill us when the Mission vessel leaves, or they will steal all we possess.' Then I heard her husband in tremulous tones saying, 'We must remember for what we have come here—not to get pearl shell, or trepang, or any earthly riches, but to tell these people about the true God, and the loving Saviour Jesus Christ. We must think of what He suffered for us. If they kill us, or steal our goods, whatever we have to suffer, it will be very little compared with what He suffered for us.' I could stand it no longer, but walked away till I recovered myself; then I entered the hut, and talked, and prayed, and wept with them. Our party soon joined us, and when we walked down to the boat, I need scarcely say, that we were all sad and sorrowful, and as we pulled off to the ship, and beheld the weeping little group on the beach surrounded by naked, noisy savages, one could not help feeling how little the world knows of its truest heroes."

The climate of the country proving fatal to the teachers from the South Sea Islands, "it became painfully evident that New Guinea must be evangelized, if at all, by New Guineans. The responsibility of bringing South Sea Islanders to a place where half of them died

was too great, hence my resolve to establish the Papuan Institute, and train a native agency from amongst the people themselves. This having been tried and worked well, a similar institution was started at Port Moresby. The plan thus adopted was a new departure, and as such excited a great deal of opposition when it was first proposed, but experience has shown that it is likely to answer exceedingly well."

In a chapter entitled "Their Manners and Customs," Dr. Macfarlane tells us that there is "abundant evidence to show that both the races living on the island are, whenever they are left to themselves and are unaffected by influences from without, distinctly retrograding." With regard to cannibalism, our author is of opinion that the practice horrible and revolting though it is, does not indicate the lowest type of humanity, and that it arose from revenge. It is encouraging to find that it is slowly but surely disappearing, and this, not as the result of growing civilization, but of the humanizing and elevating influence of the gospel. "Considering the great liking that cannibals have for human flesh, and that cannibalism very soon sneaks out at the back door when Christianity has entered at the front, we still behold the power of the old gospel over the human heart—the response of the soul, however degraded, to the call of its Master. Cannibalism has received its death blow in New Guinea. It may 'die hard' in some places, but die it must. Not only is the axe laid at the root of that terrible tree, but the tree itself has been struck with a fatal blow that will quiver through all its branches, carrying death to the remotest twig." We should like to have given some further extracts, but those we have already given are sufficient to show the general character of the book. We must content ourselves with heartily recommending it to our readers, and advising them to get it and read it for themselves.

*The Sermon Bible*. Genesis—II. Samuel. (Hodder and Stoughton.) We hardly know whether or not we ought to rejoice in the multiplication of helps for the pulpit. As we must have preachers, and as many who have to occupy the pulpit in these days of intellectual unrest and of an imperfect culture, which is far more difficult to satisfy than that which is more thorough, feel the pressure of the strain upon them, it is well that there should be books which make their task somewhat easier. The great fear is lest it should be made so easy as to repress original power. The latter danger, however, has to be faced at whatever cost, and, as such work will be done, we must desire that it should be thoroughly well done. This certainly is the case in the first volume of "The Sermon Bible" before us. The idea is well conceived, and if it be carried out as it has been begun, the editor will have rendered an invaluable service to a large class of ministers. Not only have we sketches of sermons on important texts, but these are accompanied with references to the most valuable works on the subject. The list of books consulted (which is given at the beginning) itself indicates an extent and variety of reading which is certainly not

common; and the book itself shows that this is not a mere parade of research without any corresponding work behind it. We are both astonished and interested at the industry with which the editor has collected his illustrative passages from the most unexpected quarters. He does not merely go to volumes of sermons, but he collects choice passages from magazines where, unfortunately, they are too likely to be buried and forgotten. He has been thoroughly catholic, taking his material indiscriminately from all churches, and from some who are accounted heterodox, as well as from those who have a reputation for soundness; and he thus enables us to see how much of real unity underlies the diversities to which only too much importance is attached. We only hope that the book will be as wisely used as it has been judiciously prepared; that it may be a stimulus to thought instead of a substitute for it; and that it may serve as a guide to reading instead of being itself treated as a storehouse whose treasures are to be appropriated bodily without further attempt to increase them by diligent use. If used in this way it will be a gain, not only to the preachers, but to the congregations also.

*Christian Facts and Forces.* By NEWMAN SMYTH, D.D. (T. Fisher Unwin.) Newman Smyth is one of a school who are regarded with unconcealed suspicion by those who are possessed by the "Down-grade" alarm. The ground for this doubt it is not very easy to discover. It is true that Dr. Smyth does not speak in the dialect of a former generation, and his theology does not exactly fit into all its grooves. It may be that he is occasionally somewhat extreme and daring in his statements, as men of independent mind are apt to be in their rebellion against ideas which appear to them to be too narrow and exclusive in their views of the gospel and the Church. But he is always loyal to the Lord. In these able sermons before us, for example, Christ Himself is the centre of all those "forces" by which the world is to be renewed. The note of "universal grace and Divine love for the world, which was struck in the song of the angels at the birth of Christ, and which, perhaps like celestial music, the speech, and doctrine, and sacrifice of the Son of God and man," is the key of all these discourses. As he says in a striking sentence in the first sermon of all: "The day after the hour of Christ's advent was a new day in the history of the world. . . . The old passed away the new era began, and only the angels knew what a revolution had been wrought by the quiet power of God. The wonder of that day after the Advent has grown with the years." There surely must be good in a teaching in which Christ Himself is Alpha and Omega; and instead of denunciation it ought to be met with friendly consideration, so that if error be mingled with the truth it may be carefully sifted and separated from it. The author's conception of the Church is surely grand and noble, and one which we should desire to see embodied in action. Here it is: "I hold, therefore, this idea of a

universal good for man to be the true idea of the Church of God—the idea to be derived from the Gospels and the Person of Christ, from Pentecost and from Peter, and from all the apostles, at least after Pentecost. It is the idea, not of some select society, or exclusive body, or isolated communion of men, but the grand inspiring idea of a society in which all men are to become one, of a body in which all particular groups and affinities of men are to be members one of another—of a Church of the living God for the world. The churches are called, in the name of the Son of Man, to represent and to begin to realize on earth this true society, this large, generous, redeemed humanity which is the Church of the living God. And although the actual Christianity of an age may seem to lie in sharp contrast against this Divine ideal, even as a low fen may lie in dark contrast beneath a sunset, nevertheless let us keep this ideal shining in our eyes; let us cherish in our hearts the inspiration of this hope of a Church of humanity. And perhaps never more clearly or hopefully has the way been shown in which the city of God is coming from heaven, than it is revealed by the course of Christianity in these latter days. For this is pre-eminently the age of missionary Christianity and the missionary Church; and what is that but the beginning of the holy catholic Church universal?"

It is worse than idle to denounce a man who keeps such an aim steadily before him, as though he had denied or compromised the faith. He has done nothing of the kind. All that he endeavours to do is to translate the old truth into the language of this generation, and if in any respect he has erred, the course of a Christian brother is to give him a more perfect understanding in the ways of the Lord. His position, and that of numbers beside, is admirably stated in the following paragraph:

"We may think that the general religious temper of some former age was better than ours: but we have to breathe the religious atmosphere which the Spirit, that bloweth where it listeth, provides in our times; and Christian wisdom consists always in making the best of present providential conditions. The atmosphere of the carboniferous age was doubtless more favourable than that of the present day for the formation of the vegetable growths which have been left for our use in the great coal beds; but our present atmosphere is the air provided for our life—and, indeed, there are more singing birds in it. We should gain nothing by bringing back, if we could, the carboniferous age of theology—the age of the deposit of the great confessions;—our duty is to make the most profitable use of these results of the past life of the Church, and let Christian faith grow now, as best it may, according to its present spiritual environment."

*Natural Laws and Gospel Teachings.* By HERBERT W. MORRIS, D.D. (R. T. S.) The object of this book is to show the essential



agreement that exists between the laws of nature and the statements contained in the Gospels. Its re-publication at the present time is peculiarly opportune in view of the attacks that are being made upon Christianity from the standpoint of the physical sciences. It will serve to throw some fresh light on some of the most important religious questions of the day. The opening chapter on "the coincidence of the evangelists' statements with those of recent explorers in relation to the physical features, natural productions, cities, villages, streams, and routes of the land in which the scenes of the gospel were enacted," will help to confirm our confidence, if it needs confirming, in the truthfulness of the Gospel narratives. The subjects of the remaining chapters are "Natural Laws and the Miracles of Christ," "Natural Laws and Answers to Prayer," "Natural Laws and the Resurrection of the Dead," "Natural Laws and the Final Conflagration."

*Herr Paulus.* By WALTER BESANT. Three Vols. (Chatto and Windus.) Mr. Besant has seldom had a more difficult task than that which he has undertaken in these volumes. His main object is to expose the absurdities of Spiritualism in its varied forms, and seldom has this been done with more effectiveness. Whether we look at the self-deluded fanatic Brudenel, who has given himself up to believe all spiritualist imposture, who has harboured successively one Prophet after another, and whom we leave, after all the bitter experiences recorded in this story, still possessed by the old illusion, and declaring, as he has declared again and again before, that he has at last found Solid Rock; or at the unhappy Laura Medlock, who has so long played the part of a Medium, and finds herself compelled in her advancing years to resort to all kinds of expedients to maintain a reputation; or to Mrs. Tracey Hanley whose one aim is to make some social capital out of each new spiritual lion,—the effect is the same. The satire is inimitable, and it is well sustained to the last. Indeed the closing chapter in which the disillusioned devotees of Herr Paulus show that they have learned nothing from experience, and prepare to run through the same course of blind infatuation with the new prophetess as they had done with their dethroned oracle, is in some respects the most effective tableau of the whole. The dinner in honour of the "Russian Princess" who was experimenting on their credulity was "as dull, as stupid, and as solemn" as its predecessors. "A whole bench of Beadles could not have dined together more solemnly; a whole body of Cathedral vergers could not have been more solemn." All this is admirable and as useful as it is admirable. If ridicule could kill spiritualistic follies it might be hoped that Mr. Besant had done it. Nothing certainly could be more effective than his representations of this strange cult, and its still stranger worshippers. It would seem as though the work must have been done thoroughly *con amore*, it is done so perfectly and with so much power. The difficulty of his task lies in the fact that the hero is himself one of the pretenders whom it

is the business of the book to expose. It is true that it undertakes to tell the story of his fall as well as of his rise and greatness, and that to this a very large proportion of the tale is given. But the sympathy of the reader has to be kept with one who is an impostor, and who in the end has to confess the fact. The art with which this is effected is very great. Of course the incidents are not very probable, and at some points are so far removed from the ordinary experience of life as to occasionally lose interest. But granted the conditions of the story, it may truly be said that Mr. Besant has seldom displayed more artistic skill, and has seldom done more valuable service.

*The Devil's Die.* By GRANT ALLEN. Three Vols. (Chatto and Windus.) It might seem as though some of our novelists had agreed to expose the folly of the popular idolatry of intellect. Mr. Besant's "Paul" can hardly be said to possess great mental power, but it was a certain brilliancy of manner together with the faith in his supernatural endowments which enabled him to achieve such rapid and dazzling success; and certainly the general effect of "Herr Paulus" is to insist on the superiority of moral worth to train powers of whatever kind. In "Robert Elsmere," as is pointed out elsewhere, one of the most striking and repulsive portraits is that of a man who represents intellect without faith, without conscience, without heart. But from Mr. Grant Allen this kind of lesson was hardly to be expected; he is a great scientist, and yet here he shows us not only how large scientific attainments are consistent with a low moral development, but how the scientific passion may itself become an incentive and temptation to the basest and most brutal of crimes. In Harry Chichele we are doubtless intended to have an illustration of that doctrine of Heredity which at present seems to be the favourite point in biological science. But if Chichele had the taint of his Begum ancestor in his blood, it was by his passion for science that it was developed into activity. The lesson is much needed, and it is all the more impressive as coming from one who is hardly less distinguished as a scientist than as a writer of fiction. The tale is well told; the contrast of character between the three young men admirably worked out, and some of the descriptive passages extremely powerful. We have great doubts, however, as to the third volume. The interest culminates at the close of the second, and the third has too much the character of an appendix.

*Mary Jane Married.* By G. R. SIMS. (Chatto and Windus.) The art of Mr. Sims in this book, as in its predecessor, is really inimitable of its kind. The light desultory gossiping and withal good-natured and extremely sensible talk of the landlady of a quiet, moral public-house, promoted from being a housemaid, is taken off to perfection. The stories are slight in texture, but their charm lies in the style of the telling.

